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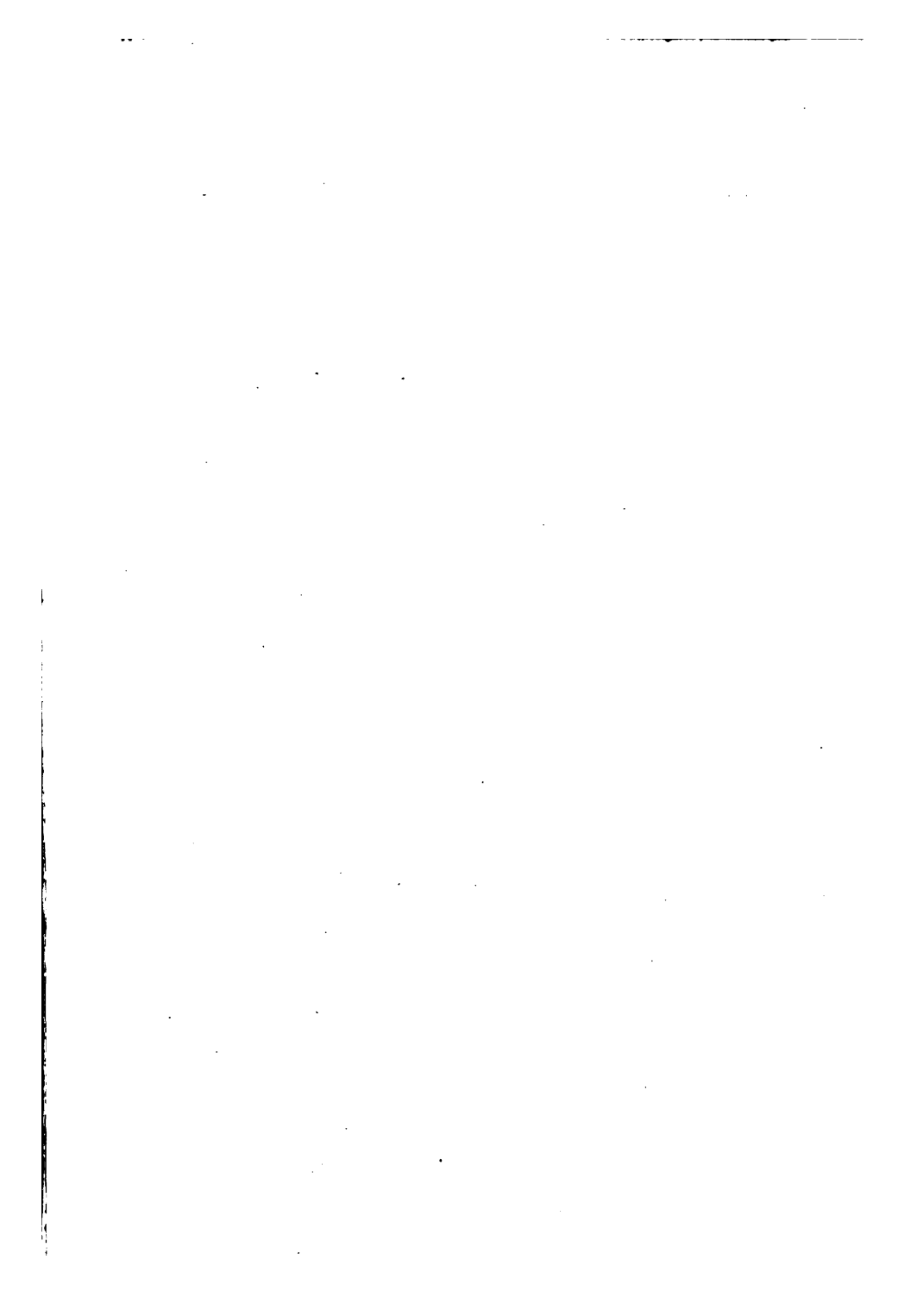
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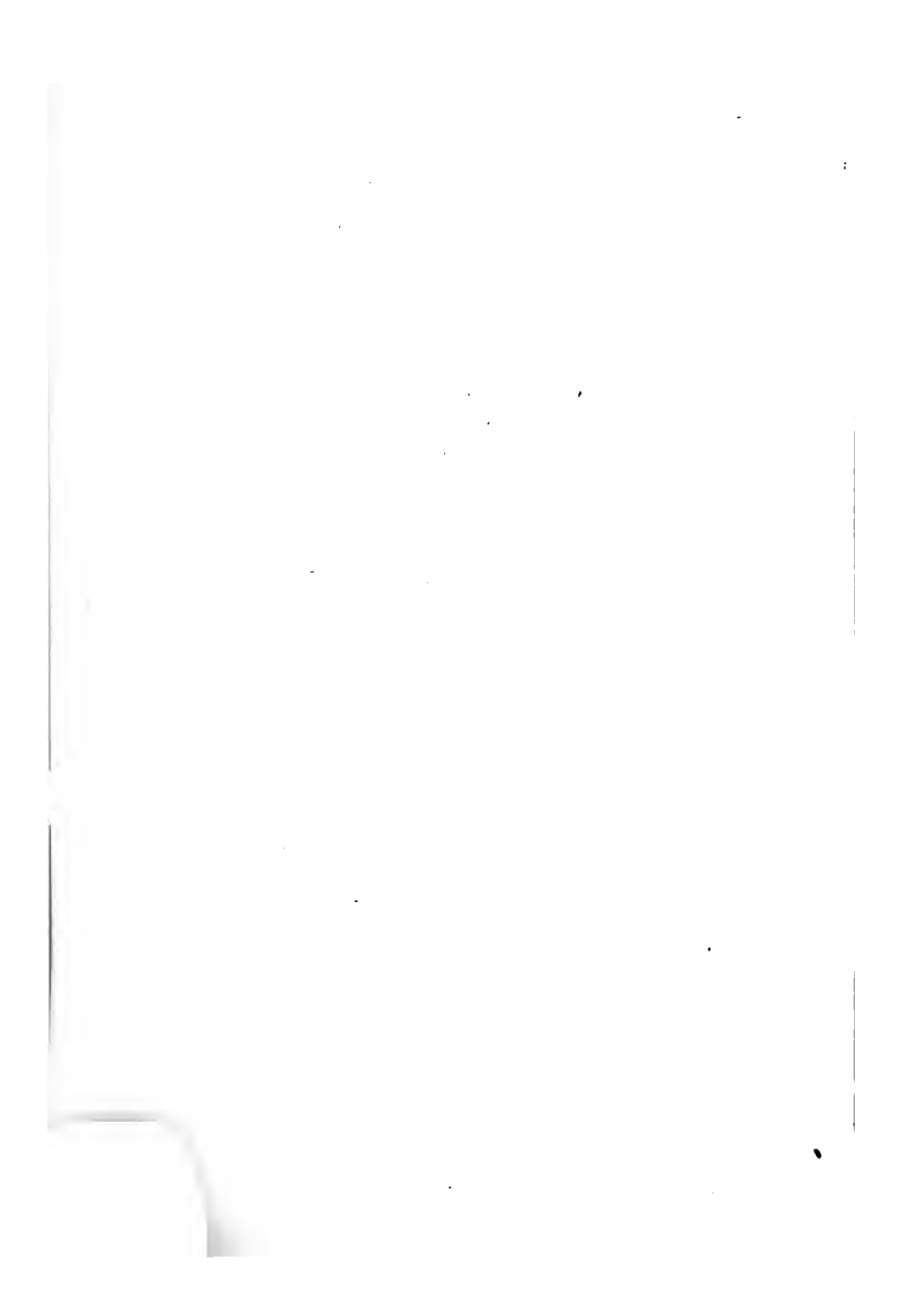
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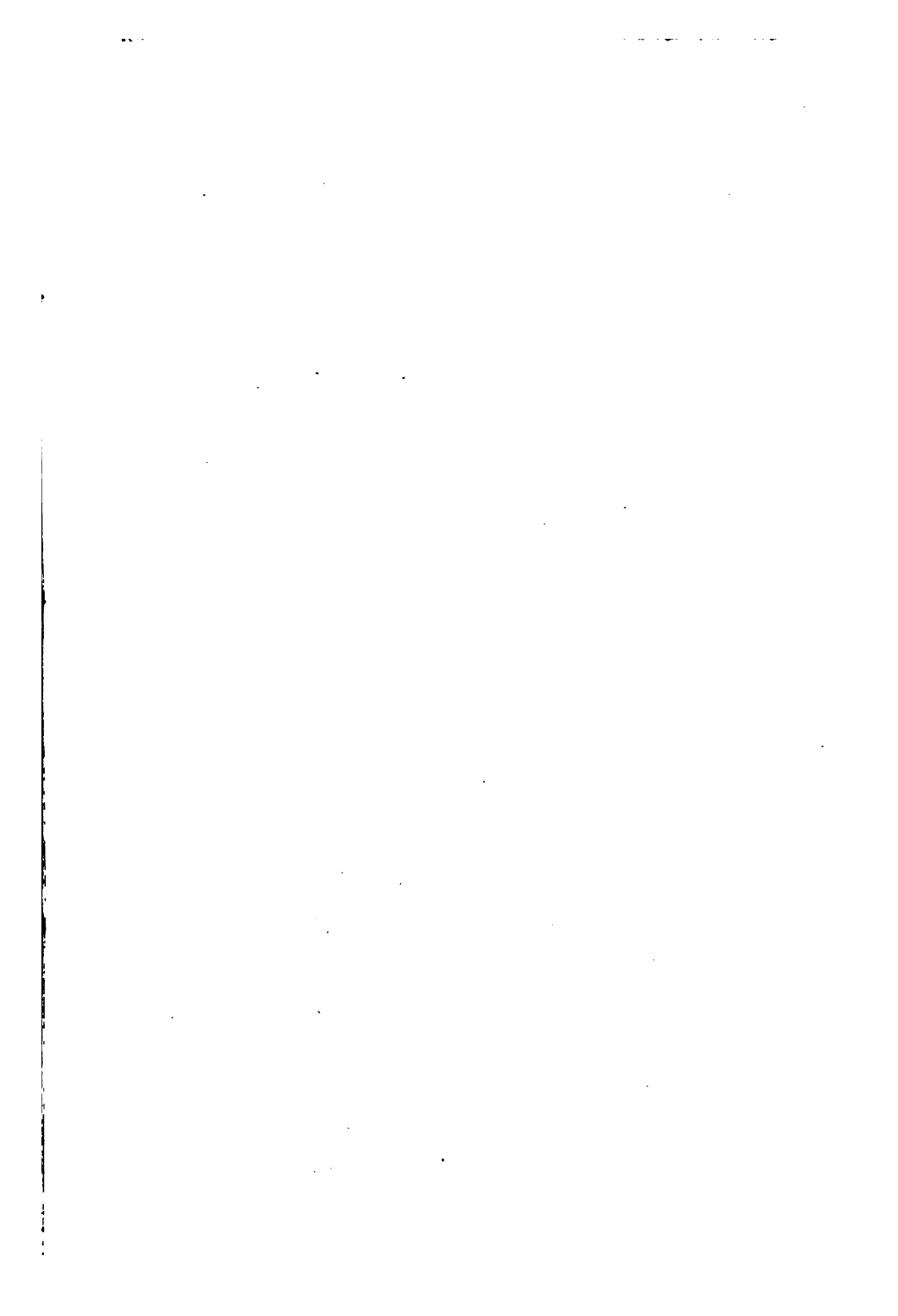
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BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

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CHÂTEAU DE LA FAVÈDE.

BENJAMIN DU PLESSIS

CONTINUED

THE PLEASANT

THE PLEASANT

ON

BY

D. BONDURAN

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF AMSTERDAM

DEPARTMENT OF THE

of the Department of the

LONDON

JOHN BONDURAN AND SONS, LTD.

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BENJAMIN DU PLAN

GENTLEMAN OF ALAIS

DEPUTY-GENERAL OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES
OF FRANCE

FROM 1725 TO 1763.

By

D. BONNEFON,
=

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF ALAIS,
DEPARTMENT OF GARD.

(Translated from the original with the Author's permission.)

LONDON:
HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXVIII.



CHÂTEAU DE LA FAVÈDE.

BENJAMIN DUNN

OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

OF THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY BENJAMIN DUNN.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON, FROM THE
EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT.

As it is now, and as it was, in the year 1600.

LONDON: 1791.

R. DODD AND SONS, 10, ST. MARK'S LANE.

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STATIONERS.

the devout and heroic subject of this biography,¹ but it was enough to stimulate me to further research.

With this object I made a journey to Geneva, and consulted there the correspondence of Antoine Court, the friend and fellow-worker of Benjamin Du Plan—well-known for the part he took in the revival of French Protestantism in the last century. Amongst the documents preserved in the public library of Geneva, I had the pleasure of finding many original letters written by your ancestor to Antoine Court; you may easily imagine with what interest I read them! I went expecting at most to learn a few particulars relating to his life; I found his biography almost ready to my hand.

The plan was laid out, the work itself more than half accomplished. I had only to select from the literary treasures before me the letters in which was unfolded the life-story of one of the chief actors in a little known but most important episode of our religious history. You on your part were good enough to entrust me with your family papers, which—especially the letters of Du Plan to his family and friends—helped to fill up a great gap in the correspondence that I had found at Geneva. The letters of Du Plan and Court go no further than the time of the unfortunate misunderstanding which

1. *Histoire de la Restauration du Protestantisme en France*, by Edmond Hugues.

embittered their relations and interrupted their intercourse, while the papers that you placed at my disposal have enabled me to trace your progenitor to the close of his career. They show him in the character of a true Christian, and as the indefatigable and self-sacrificing representative of the Huguenot Churches of France, and their perusal fully confirmed me in the admiration with which I had already begun to regard him.

I have arranged these materials in a consecutive form, and the running commentary by which they are connected will serve to elucidate and explain them. This is all my plan, but it is the portrait not the frame to which I desire to direct attention—a portrait whose original, as well by his high lineage as his magnanimous character, is worthy to rank with our most illustrious Protestants.

May the piety of Benjamin Du Plan rouse the emulation of more than one reader of his life ! Then shall we have no reason to despair of the future of our Churches. I can well believe that you are proud to be the descendant of such a man, and that you will hesitate at no sacrifice to honor his memory and make known his work. If I have been able to assist in this noble object my feeble efforts will have been amply rewarded.

D. BONNEFON, Pastor.

Alais, September, 1876.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN

GENTLEMAN* OF ALAIS.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH AND CONVERSION OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1688—1710.

Benjamin de Ribot, Seigneur du Caila and Du Plan, belonged to an ancient and noble family the origin of which dates back to the sixteenth century. His father, Jacques de Ribot, was a rich feudal lord having a castle and vassals, besides being proprietor of the lands of Caila, Du Plan, la Favède, and Rouveret.

Benjamin was born on the 13th of March, 1688, in the Castle of La Favède, a village situated not far from Alais, at the foot of those Cevenne Mountains which yet resound with the heroic deeds of the Camisards. Very little is known of his family

(*) The French title *Gentilhomme*, served formerly to designate a man of noble family.

or his infancy. The little we do know has been gathered from family papers and the correspondence of Benjamin du Plan with Antoine Court. In 1710, when this history commences, Benjamin had living both father and mother, and a young sister who later went to reside with her aunt at Geneva, where she died.

What was the attitude of the family of Du Plan in the terrible conjuncture of this epoch? Did they belong to the class of the new converts, that is to say to those who joined the Catholics and followed, outwardly at least, the forms of the Romish Church, as was the case with the greater number of the rich and powerful? It is probable. Of one thing however we are certain, that Benjamin was very early among the number of those pious men who, despising all threats, refused to conform, and who guarded in the depth of their hearts, pure and untouched, the old faith of their fathers. After having served in the Royal Army, then a custom obligatory upon all young Nobles, we find him at the age of twenty-two laying down his sword in order that he might devote himself entirely to the service of the Church and encourage, by his example, his persecuted brethren.

The young man had a tender heart and an ardent imagination; the stories told by his father and mother had deeply moved him; in his youth he had been interested by the stirring histories of Cavalier and of Roland, and his native home recalled at every step some exciting association. He had himself

witnessed the acts of violence practised against his co-religionists. Sometimes he had seen from the tower of the castle soldiers marching towards Brenoux, a village situated close to La Favède and a stronghold of Protestantism. At other times he had heard the firing of musketry and had seen his fellow Protestants, chained together as criminals, pass under the windows on their way to the dungeons of the fort of Alais, from thence to be sent either to the galleys at Marseilles or to the Tower of Constance. In 1705, being then seventeen years of age, he heard that the neighbouring villages of Brenoux, St-Paul-Lacoste and Soustelle, having been suspected of giving refuge to a Camisard band, had been pillaged and burned and that all the inhabitants had been put to death. The result of these scenes which were so common and harrassing to his feelings, will be shown in his future history.

"In 1710," he tell us, "having made the acquaintance of the preachers of the Cross, I abandoned my position in the army to devote myself entirely to the support and diffusion of the Protestant religion."

Who were the preachers that so moved the heart of this young soldier and induced him to leave the army of Louis XIV. that he might join the holy militia of Jesus-Christ? Most probably they were some of the elder Camisard prophets, survivors of the last war, who sought by their fervid discourses to revive the dying zeal and rouse the slumbering energies of the Protestants, and to organise if possible a new crusade. But the time was passed; the

defeat of Ravanel and of Catinat had discouraged every heart. Moreover revolt was impossible. The country was encircled and guarded in all directions. To fight under such circumstances would have been useless. Of this they were convinced. Then, too, the discourses of these elder Camisards, which for many preceding years had been so eloquent, had lost their power and could not reawaken any echo in the breasts of their hearers. Wearied and discouraged, the old preachers returned to their mountain home to mourn the past.

But from 1701 the old Cevenol prophets had been succeeded by other preachers of a new kind—men, but more often women, and sometimes even children, who spoke in secret meetings. The chief Camisards were dead, the shepherds exiled, and the flock scattered and forsaken; then these heroic women, consulting only their faith, their duty, and their self denial, filled up the void and supplied the place of the absent. In the midst of the raging storm they held courageously in hand the helm of the Church, and braving the edicts and scorning death saved expiring Protestantism at the peril of their lives. They journeyed from country to country, from Vivarais into the Cevennes and from the Cevennes into Lower Languedoc, stopping in the towns and villages and preaching and praying where they were desired or where they were moved by the Spirit.

They prophesied, believing themselves to be inspired; but instead of the shrieks, the frenzy, and the excited cries which characterized the ancient

Cevenol prophets, they employed soft words, affectionate language and tears. In eccentric discourses composed of biblical quotations and the strange recital of their visions, they preached repentance and cherished the hope in the midst of their present suffering of a better future. They rarely encouraged rebellion, but rather waited patiently with joy and firm hope for deliverance from God; they frequented especially those places which had been the scenes of the Camisard war, Brenoux, Alais, Congénies, Nîmes, Ganges, Lorient, and Lunel. They were there the recipients of a blind confidence. No one undertook anything without first consulting them. Had anyone a doubt as to the prudence of making a journey to attend a meeting, the inspired of the district were immediately consulted. They even proclaimed their ability to exorcise and to heal. It often happened that their prophecies were not fulfilled and that the sick did not recover; in spite of this nothing could shake the confidence or dissipate the illusions of the Protestants. This credulity constituted the power of the inspired and led in some cases to grave abuses.

Thus it happened that old Camisards and prophetesses were the first preachers who shaped the religious education of Benjamin Du Plan. His artless soul and his youthful imagination were profoundly impressed by their discourses. His conscience was touched; he learned to lament and weep over his sins, and after the bitter torments of repentance found at last joy and peace. He was often seen at night

climbing over the walls of the castle, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his father and the tender reproaches of his mother, and setting out by little known paths and goat tracks to ascend the hill and to walk the short distance which separated the castle from the village of Brenoux. There would he listen with delight to the burning, affectionate, and edifying words of the Inspired. He soon became one of the most frequent and regular attendants at these secret meetings. Once he ventured to overcome his natural timidity. He felt himself inwardly moved to speak; he did speak, and with so much unction and ease that from that day forth the peasants considered him as their shepherd and gathered around him. Du Plan did not wish to forfeit their confidence; he accepted this perilous honor, though it exposed him to almost innumerable dangers.

Would the cruel laws which filled the galleys, the prisons, and the convents with Protestants be less severe against a young Noble who abused his influence to pervert the new converts? His name, his rank, his titles and his social position, all made him a mark for the anger of the government. Nevertheless he braved all perils. One day in an assembly an Inspired rose, and under the influence of the Spirit said to him: "I tell thee my child not to fear, the enemy shall not put his hand upon thee; thou shalt pass through the fire and the water and they shall not harm thee."

If he had hesitated before, this incident led him at once to a decision! Henceforth he belonged no

more to himself, he belonged to God and to the Church. Thus, in spite of the opposition of his parents, of his friends and of all the wise and prudent of his time, he embraced with enthusiasm his vocation as evangelist, though this vocation might lead him to a martyr's end.

CHAPTER II.

CONDITION OF FRENCH PROTESTANTISM.

1710—1715.

The better to understand the services that Benjamin Du Plan was called to render to his co-religionists and to appreciate his courage until the moment he made the acquaintance of Antoine Court, it is necessary to know the state of French Protestantism between 1710 and 1715. The war of the Camisards was ended. Coste, and Abraham Mazel, the last of the prophets, had been hanged in 1710; Claris had been broken on the wheel; the last few preachers had hidden themselves in the mountains, and the faithful, tried by the cruelty of the edicts and by the dread of bodily suffering, no longer ventured out of the towns to worship God secretly in the Desert. The last assemblies were completely dispersed in 1711 by the soldiers, and it was thought that all trace of Protestantism had disappeared. A new Edict of the 8th of March 1712, starting from

the principle that there were no more Huguenots in France, declared that all those who henceforth should die without the sacraments were to be considered as *relaps*, that is to say their memory should be ignored, their goods confiscated, and their bodies dragged on the hurdle, and deprived of sepulture. In virtue of this cruel Edict, when a Protestant fell sick the priests carrying the viaticum entered his house, followed by the ushers and the registrar, and in the midst of the afflicted relatives they wearied with their demands and their menaces the old men, the women and the young girls. If the sick man repelled the priest his family was ruined and his name publicly dishonored. In the South where the most revolting scenes were enacted it was a common thing for mobs to gather round the house of a dead heretic and clamorously demand his body. Amidst the plaudits of the crowd, a hurdle would be brought, the naked corpse, scarcely cold, would be placed upon it and dragged by the jeering rabble in the gutters, and through the streets and public places of the town; finally the corpse after being hanged by the feet to a gibbet for twenty-four hours would be cast into the sewer.

Another result of this Edict was to render illegitimate any marriages solemnized elsewhere than at the Church. As civil marriage did not exist at this period it was necessary that all marriages should take place before a priest, else the law did not recognize them, and husbands could, if they wished, demand their nullity and contract new unions. To

avoid the grave consequences resulting from this state of things, some compromised with their consciences, and were married at the Church as well as by the pastor. Let me add, however, that the greater part, the law notwithstanding, were united only according to their own faith, but they were considered to live in disorder and their children were regarded as illegitimate.

The ancient and cruel decrees published after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes were put in force with greater vigour than ever. The unhappy Huguenots were harried from the cradle to the grave. Their children were torn from them, baptized, and conducted by force to the Catholic Schools. Their men could not occupy any public office however humble, commercial and industrial careers were alone open to them, and the simple title of Protestant exposed them to the most cruel injustice on the part of a biassed and hostile legislation. They were subjected to a constant surveillance not only by the clergy and the King's officers but even by their own neighbours, a single charge being sufficient to ruin them. They were compelled to observe the fasts and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, to be present on Sundays at the services and to confess and communicate once every year. If they failed, they were threatened and accused of disobeying the King. Not being in a condition to resist, the Protestants submitted for the most part to these requirements, but they were Huguenots in their hearts.

As to those who remained obdurate their lot was pitiable. At first numerous fines were imposed, and if they still refused to abjure they were punished according to the fullest rigour of the law. The men had their goods confiscated and were sent to the galleys for life, the women were confined in convents and prisons. The young girls were incarcerated in the old Castle of Carcassonne, and the women in the Tower of Constance. This Tower is situated in the salt marshes which surround Aigues-Mortes. It is a round and massive building ninety feet high and sixty feet broad, divided into two stories forming two vast vaulted chambers of considerable height. The Protestants were confined in the uppermost. They lived huddled together in this dungeon, which was lighted by a large opening in the roof six feet wide, exposing them to the sun, the rain, and the unwholesome exhalations of the neighbouring marshes. Hope of escape there was none. Sentinels watched the roof. A narrow and winding staircase, shut by a double door of iron, and guarded, formed the only means of egress. The walls were eighteen feet in thickness.

Protestants condemned to the galleys were sent to Dunkirk or Rochefort, to Toulon or to Marseilles. They were conducted to the bagnio¹, coupled by the neck, the hands, and the feet to thieves and assassins. The heaviest chains were reserved for the

1. The place where the Convicts were detained when not at work on the galleys.

Protestants ; if they fell with fatigue, strokes from a stick compelled them to rise. On their arrival at the bagnio, after being attired in the *casaque* and the *bonnet rouge* they were led to the galleys. There with the other galley slaves they were attached two by two to the benches of the ship, so that they were unable to move further than the length of their chain and had to eat, drink and sleep at their posts. They were made to swing the long and heavy oars which propelled the galley. A gallery was raised the whole length of the benches where the inspectors, holding the lash in their hand, walked to and fro. At the time of service and at the elevation of the host, they forced the Huguenot galley slave to doff his *bonnet* ; if he refused they laid bare his back, four men held his hands and feet, while the executioner armed with a tarred rope stiffened by the sea water struck him with all his force. The victim recoiled under the rope, the skin was torn, his back became one quivering and bloody wound which was afterwards washed with salt and vinegar. Some unfortunates would get as many as one hundred and fifty lashes ; if they fainted they were carried to the hospital and received, when cured the remainder of their punishment. Numbers were condemned to the galleys in 1712 and 1713.

These galley slaves were not of the lower orders, they belonged in general to the best and most honorable families in France ; merchants, sons of pastors, magistrates, and noblemen. Can the intensity of their sufferings be imagined ! Their only conso-

lation was in prayer. Now and then they might receive a secret visit from a brave friend who would slip into their hands a letter bathed with the tears of their wives, their parents, and their persecuted and proscribed brethren. Collections were made for them in France, in the Assemblies of the Desert, and in foreign countries; these gifts touched their hearts, and in the records of the French Church in London are still preserved many affecting letters written by these unfortunates, who despite their hard lot forgot not to thank those who had remembered the poor captives.

To escape these persecutions, some of the richer Protestants fled to foreign lands with their families and their fortunes, but in 1713 an Edict forbade all new converts to quit the kingdom under pain of being sent to the galleys for life, while those who aided them to escape became liable to the penalty of death.

Notwithstanding these decrees, the Protestants remained calm, waiting with resignation for better days. A small number fled, a still smaller number abjured, and the remainder conformed in appearance to the practices of the Romish Church. In place of public service they celebrated each day in their own houses family worship; there they read the Bible and strengthened themselves by prayer. We possess one of these touching prayers which was read on Sundays around the hearth at the same hour that in peaceful days they were wont to repair to the house of God :

"Great God, Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, but Who hast promised to be found where two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou seest us assembled in this house to praise Thee, to adore Thy greatness, and to implore Thy compassion. We mourn in secret that we are deprived of our public ordinances and also that Thou dost not hear in our temples the voice of Thy servants. But far from murmuring against Thy providence, we acknowledge that Thou couldst with justice overwhelm us with Thy most severe judgments; thus we admire Thy goodness in the midst of Thy chastisements. But we implore Thee to have pity upon us. We are without temples, but do Thou fill this house with Thy glorious presence! We are without pastors; but be Thou Thyself our pastor. Instruct us in the truths of Thy Gospel. We are about to read and meditate upon Thy word. Imprint it on our hearts! From what we may there learn make us to know Thee better, what Thou art and what we are; what Thou hast done for our salvation and what we ought to do for Thy service; make us to know the virtues that are pleasing in Thy sight and the vices that Thou abhorrest; the penalties with which Thou threatenest the impenitent, the lukewarm, the timid, the cowardly, and the profane, and the glorious recompense that Thou hast promised to those who shall be faithful to Thee. May we, when we retire from this short worship, be more holy, more zealous for Thy glory and for Thy truth, more drawn from the world and more strictly observant of Thy commandments! Hear us for Thy Son's sake!"

Occasionally, and at long intervals, a pastor, disguised in a borrowed costume and decorated with chaplets and relics, the better to ward off suspicion, would visit them. These courageous missionaries stole, at the peril of their lives, from house to house, baptizing the new born, marrying

the betrothed, exhorting the sick and comforting the dying. When one of them arrived in a village—where the faithful would often contend amongst themselves for the perilous honor of receiving him, a secret assembly was immediately convoked; the hour and the place of rendez-vous, a lonely wood, a deep cave, or a secluded valley, were whispered one to another. and at the hour appointed, mostly at night, each started alone for the appointed place. There the pastor read the gospel, addressed an exhortation, and administered the sacrament. The service was opened and closed by the singing of psalms. As soon as the congregation was assembled sentinels were stationed in the neighbourhood, or mounted on the trees and the rocks where they kept watch and signalled the approach of the soldiers. In 1712 and 1713, the Intendants and the military governors followed up these assemblies with the utmost rigour. The women who were there captured were condemned to prison, the men to the galleys, and the pastor to the gibbet. The following is a description of one of these meetings in the Desert as given by an eye witness; it dates from the latter part of the seventeenth century, but all these assemblies were of similar character.

“ About a year before our brethren of the Cevennes had raised the Standard of the Holy War, we received a three days notice that the venerable Brousson would hold an assembly at the Baume-des-Hors, near Mus; the place which bore this name was nothing more than an ancient and disused quarry. The place was well chosen. Picture to

yourself a rugged hill furrowed in every direction, with deep hollows and precipitous sides and quarried to the very summit. It might be likened to an immense whale in the carcase of which a thousand voracious fishes had made innumerable openings. Strangers visit these places with caution, where on all hands open black abysses which cannot be looked into without giddiness, and among which it is impossible to venture without losing one's way. But these disruptions and upheavals, this labyrinth of passes, and these numerous pathways among the precipices, wonderfully favored us in putting us beyond reach of the pursuing cavalry. The Baume-des-Hors was concealed behind bushes and a large rock; the opening was so narrow and tortuous that it was impossible to enter it without climbing. On the morning of the appointed day, the suspicions of the Catholics were averted by some pretending to be ill, and by others going to mass. The Psalms and the books for worship as well as the arms which had escaped discovery were disinterred." (Later Antoine Court would not allow arms to be brought to the assemblies.) "The women trembled, but nevertheless they did not advise us to absent ourselves from the assembly, because though they feared the danger, on the other hand they heartily desired us to unite ourselves with the brethren. The day appeared long while waiting for this joyous event, and though we were under fear of a great danger, we alternated between the hope of seeing the spiritual family and the dread of never again beholding our families after the flesh! At length the night arrived and with it a cold and penetrating rain. The weather was fearful. God had evidently favoured us; we stole away stealthily, leaving our old men sorrowful and our mothers praying for us. I had not yet reached my eighteenth year—my sister, my brother, and my father accompanied me. On the road we met the sentinels at their posts already, who promised us to keep good watch. The assembly was already numerous when we arrived; for the whole Vaunage had flocked thither. What a sad spectacle! the clothes of the

women, the girls, and the children dripped with water; the wind imprisoned in the deep hollows made a plaintive howling; and to light up the cavernous depths there were a few small lanterns, whose feeble gleam only rendered the darkness of the place more horrible.

"In the midst of the Assembly was seated the venerable Brousson, wearing the coarse dress of a peasant, rendered still more mean by the dirt which had soiled it. The women had encircled with their black aprons the chair which served for a pulpit. The chalices and the bread for the sacrament were placed on a stone. The service commenced by the reading of the Bible and the singing of psalms. They were doubtless well chosen for the occasion. While listening to the unfortunate Fulcran Rey of Nimes, who led this part of the worship and who began thus his apprenticeship to martyrdom, we forgot the cold, we heard no more of the storm and we thought no more of the dragonnades. The preacher chose for his text the memorable words of Jesus Christ, found in St. Matthew Chap. X, v. 22, 'but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Wishing to convince us that salvation was not assured except to those who fought without ceasing the good fight of faith, he cited to us the example of all the confessors of ancient and apostolic times; then he described the courage of the martyrs of our own days, confounding their judges when before the Tribunal, moving their executioners when on the wheel, and receiving in Heaven the crown of life; afterwards he recounted the torments of cowardly apostates, reserved for eternal fires and consumed by the agonies of remorse. What tears of repentance fell and what solemn vows to be faithful were made at this moment! It was in the midst of our sobbing that the pastor blessed the bread and the wine; then we prostrated ourselves before God and besought Him to pardon and strengthen us. All at once a voice cried: 'The dragoons'!!! 'Fly'!!! and at the same moment a discharge of musketry showed us that our last hour had come. I cannot describe to you what

passed in the cave. The thickest darkness enveloped us, the curses of the soldiers, and the groans of the dying were confounded together in this frightful tumult. I do not know how I made my escape. I arrived in the presence of my mother terror stricken and despondent. My relations had not yet returned; in vain we waited for them, they returned no more... My father was found lying in a hollow where he had broken his skull in falling. My brother had received a bullet in the breast, and my sister had been taken to the Tower of Constance with the women who had been captured. . . . Fifteen days afterwards I accompanied my mother to another assembly in the Desert."¹

Such were the dangers that the Nobleman of Alais embraced voluntarily in 1710. The strength of his faith and the fervour of his zeal may thus be appreciated. From that time his one aim in life day and night was to supply the place of the absent pastors; he went continually with consolations to the bedside of the sick and dying, and distributed a part of his goods to the poor and indigent. His compassionate heart urged him towards Marseilles; he wished to address a word of Christian sympathy to the confessors. Far from abating his zeal the sight of these sufferers stirred up his piety and devotion. He returned to Alais happy to have done some good to his brethren and desirous of rendering them still further assistance. Imbued with a holy zeal he went to the surrounding towns of Anduze, Nîmes, Lunel, and Montpellier, or where ever he could reunite the brethren; he performed the functions of preacher, consoled the afflicted,

1. L'Évangéliste, 1837, page 176.

strengthened the weak, preached patience and resignation and made clear to all the hope of a better future.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST JOURNEYS OF ANTOINE COURT.

1696—1715.

It is impossible to relate the life of Du Plan without speaking of Antoine Court. These two distinguished men, though of different conditions, were called very early to the same destiny. The nobleman and the peasant knew each other from their youth and lived side by side in closest intimacy during the fourteen most laborious and perilous years of their lives.

Antoine Court was born in 1696 at Villeneuve-de-Berg a small town of the Vivarais. Educated by a pious mother he received very early those religious impressions which are rarely effaced. As he belonged to a poor family he had not received a classical education ; but this want was supplied by his natural abilities, his reflections and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He even acquired in his later years an unusual acquaintance with religious questions, and the history of Protestantism. His piety was strengthened by his frequent attendance at the assemblies of the Desert, where he loved to accompany his mother in spite of the perils of the undertaking. He became an assiduous hearer, and at the age of seven-

teen he fulfilled the duties of reader. Frequently these assemblies were presided over by preachers—women and young girls—who called themselves Prophetesses and Inspired. Antoine Court was regarded as one of the young persons who after the popular belief were animated “by the Spirit of God.” He felt within himself an early call to the Holy Ministry, and a Prophetess encountering him strengthened this idea in his mind by predicting for him an early and blessed career. Falling into ecstasies she cried “The sword which thou seest on the side of My servant is My Word which shall be in his mouth as a two edged sword: this abundant dew which thou hast seen fall on his head is the same Word which shall abide in him plenteously.” One day when he was in “one of these mysterious assemblies, in a moment of sudden exaltation he began to preach. The audience, few in number and composed exclusively of women were deeply impressed. From this day his ministry really commenced.”¹ Antoine Court immediately set himself to work and convoked assemblies. The greatness of the danger did not stop him, for he felt instinctively that if the people continued to be deprived of worship it would not be long before they abandoned the faith. It was not without tears that his mother, now a widow, saw leaving her that only son who was her joy and her support; she found however in religion the power to make this sacrifice to God.

1. Ed. Hugues. *Histoire de la Restauration du Protestantisme en France.*

The following is his own touching account of this separation :

" My mother loved me tenderly. I was the only son left to her, and since the death of my father, she had set all her hopes upon me. But she knew religion; and what was better still both loved and practised it. Still she could not learn my resolution without being moved. She perceived all the dangers to which I should be exposed and she saw herself for ever deprived of a son whom she loved better than herself; but she reflected on the happiness it would afford me to be an instrument in the Hand of God for the instruction and consolation of His afflicted Church, in which she was so deeply interested, and on the advantages which that Church would one day receive from my ministry. Thus her love for me and her attachment to religion, made her experience in turn all that can be felt in the heart of a tender mother and a truly zealous Christian. What touching things did she not say to me ! What tears did she not shed ! But to strengthen her resolution and my confidence in myself, as well as to gain her approval, I preached before her, taking for my text the words of the Gospel 'Whosoever loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' All that I said on this beautiful text, so qualified to teach us how our love for God ought to exceed that for His creatures, sensibly affected my dear mother. She henceforth regarded me as a victim whom she had consecrated, like another Abraham, to the Divine Will."

The young missionary first went into the Viva-rai which had now become a true Desert. His appeals drew forth little response. Such was the terror among the brethren, that it was almost impossible to assemble ten, twenty or thirty persons in some cavern or hole in a rock. He was however less grieved by the indifference of his co-religionists, than by the ridiculous eccentricities into which the Inspired had

fallen. "My first operations," he tells us himself "were in the neighbourhood of Vivarais. The scaffolds and the gibbets were yet red with the blood of many Protestants whom the spirit of fanaticism had led into the madness of rebellion. Here were found a few men, and about fifteen women and girls who with the title of preachers combined the function of Prophets and Prophetesses. I fear I should not be believed if I were to relate all that these false or bewitched persons said both unworthy of and dishonoring to religion. I set myself at once to convince the men of imposture and to win the women and children from error. It was not unusual to see in the assemblies, few in number as they were, two or three women and sometimes men fall down in ecstasies and speak all at once, like those Corinthians to whom St. Paul addressed his censures. I soon became known as another Elijah, the scourge of the prophets. My discourse was accompanied by the happiest success, and my progress was very rapid. Shortly fanaticism disappeared altogether; those who still retained some tincture of it conversed among themselves in secret."¹

In 1715 Antoine Court went to Nimes where he had been called by the Church. After having travelled as a missionary, in Provence and Lower Languedoc, he was grieved to see the deep dejection into which the majority of his brethren had fallen. For some time he had been meditating on the best

1. *Memoire of A. Court, written in 1752 and preserved in the manuscripts of Paul Rabaut.*

means of restoring Protestantism from its abasement. It was in 1715, at the age of nineteen, that he commenced this great work.

Four ways presented themselves to him. "The first," he tells us in his *Memoirs*, "was to convoke religious assemblies and instruct the people there:—the second, to battle with fanaticism, which was spreading like a conflagration in all quarters, and to bring back to more sane ideas those who had had the weakness or the misfortune to become infected by it:—the third, to re-establish discipline, the use of consistories, of elders, of colloquies, and of synods:—the fourth, to train, as far as possible, young preachers and to call ministers from foreign countries, and if they feared to expose themselves to martyrdom, and were not disposed to respond to my pressing stimulations, then to solicit help in money from the Protestant Powers, in order to aid the studies and maintenance of young men in whom I found sufficient courage and good will to devote themselves to the service and salvation of their brethren."

Antoiné Court had already put into execution the first of these methods, by convoking assemblies in all parts. In 1715 he endeavoured to re-establish the proscribed religion. He convoked a Synod at Nîmes at which some laymen and preachers who had responded to his invitation elaborated certain rules. In this Synod it was agreed that each Church should appoint Elders who should be responsible for the convoking of assemblies in favorable places and with all possible prudence. They afterwards decided

that according to the command of St. Paul, women should henceforth be forbidden to preach : that the Holy Scriptures should become the sole rule of faith, and that as a consequence they should reject all the pretended revelations, which had been in vogue until that time, the same having caused great abuse.

History has handed down to us the names of the preachers who aided Court in his work of restoration. They were Jean Huc and Jean Vesson, who were afterwards deposed from office ; Pierre Durand and Etienne Arnaud, two future martyrs, and Jean Rouvière alias Crotte ; but the most remarkable of all was Pierre Carrière alias Cortiez. This pastor of the Desert had not had the education of Court but he surpassed him in activity and fearlessness. When the Synod met, Cortiez was at Geneva. Worn out with his long and laborious work of evangelization, and free from the incessant pursuits of the dragoons, he had gone to seek repose in that city, and had established himself there since 1712. He there married a dressmaker of the name of Isabeau. Unable with resignation to live far from his persecuted brethren, he left his wife, returned to France and the Cevennes, and did not delay to enter into communication with Antoine Court. None of these preachers had received pastoral consecration. In 1717 Court urged Cortiez to go to Zurich to receive the imposition of hands. On his return he consecrated Court in a Synod, "and thus he secured the thread of ordination, according to the apostolic rule of the French Reformed Church."

Among the laity, he who became the most eminent fellow labourer, and the most devoted friend of Antoine Court was without doubt Benjamin Du Plan.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST INTERVIEW OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN WITH ANTOINE COURT.

1715.

It was on his return from the Synod of 1715, during a tour of evangelization, that Antoine Court, on his way through Alais, saw Benjamin Du Plan for the first time. After this interview, the two young men experienced the liveliest sympathy for each other. Du Plan was older than Court by some years; he was superior in knowledge and experience in addition to which his high social position, and above all his piety, rendered him worthy of respect. "The young preacher," says the historian of Antoine Court, "submitted himself without anxiety to the authority of this man of talent, fortune, and piety. He listened to his recommendations, and confided in his experience, and as their projects were the same he arrived at no decision without first consulting him. Du Plan, on his part, encouraged him, praised his ardour, and used all his efforts to remove the difficulties that lay in his path. Indeed, in this great work of religious revival undertaken by Antoine Court with so much courage and firmness,

the warm exhortations of such men, and their support and counsel, were absolutely necessary to fortify his mind; any other man would have failed before the almost insurmountable difficulties he had to encounter." ¹

Antoine Court who already knew Benjamin Du Plan by reputation, hastened to explain to his new friend his projects of reform and the last decisions of the Synod; Du Plan at once appreciated their importance and urgent necessity. He had himself been struck with the absence of union of the Churches among themselves, and had more than once lamented the disorders produced by the unruliness of certain members. He thoroughly approved of all that had been decided upon at Nîmes, and admired not only the courage and the energy, but above all the organising genius of his young friend, and promised him his most devoted co-operation.

The heart of Antoine Court bounded at this promise, for he knew how great and legitimate was the influence of Du Plan on the Churches of Lower Languedoc; he was not unacquainted with his sympathies for the Inspired, and he had feared that the last decisions of the Synod relative to fanaticism would have alienated the young gentleman. It was not so. Without doubt the conciliatory spirit of Du Plan might have preferred more moderation in language and above all more charity :

1. Ed. Hugues, already quoted.

but he knew, on the other hand, the urgent necessity of uniting in one common organisation all the vital energies of the Church, the scattering of which would in a short time have consummated its ruin. Benjamin Du Plan, being a warm partisan of order and discipline, had already advised the formation of the official bodies agreed to by the Synod and had required from all the faithful, under pain of excommunication, respect for the constitution and discipline of the Church. In these troublous times this was its salvation.

The judgment pronounced by Court and the Synod upon the Inspired in general appeared to him excessive. He was the first to acknowledge the whims and the extravagances of some; but was it not going too far to comprehend in one category all as imposters and fools? Was it not necessary to recognise that a great number were sincere and, in consequence, worthy of great respect? During the four years he had associated with these persons and habitually attended their assemblies, he had seen and heard things which to him appeared extraordinary and inexplicable; ignorant women, and even children, expressed themselves in a choice language to which they were not accustomed, proclaiming the wonderful truths of God; many had predicted things to him which had afterwards come to pass; and finally he could not forget that at these meetings his soul had received the light of the Gospel; and that his heart had there found repose and peace.

Over and above these astonishing facts was it not true that the belief in inspiration and prophecy was also according to the analogy of faith? Did not the Bible justify this belief? Did not the Old Testament contain positive declarations on this subject? Was not that of the prophet Joel sufficient:—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit." (Joel II, 28-29.)?

Lastly had not the Spirit been revealed in all ages? Were not miracles performed in the first days of Christianity? Why should the cycle of revelation be for ever closed?

Such reasons as these justified the pious Nobleman of Alais in his particular ideas. He had disclosed them during his first interview with Antoine Court, who had not hesitated frankly to give his advice. Court was happy to see that Du Plan was no sectarian and that his particular ideas had not destroyed his ecclesiastical principles. When separating, they agreed to work frankly together for the re-establishment of order and discipline, and as to the question of inspiration they agreed to consider it later. Alas that question was destined to be the torment of the life of Du Plan; it created for him incessant annoyance, owing to the intolerance of a few pastors and laymen, and it

at last put a stop to his missionary activity. Perhaps he did not always take sufficient account of the susceptibilities and weaknesses of his brethren; and did not always exercise sufficient wisdom and prudence in his relations with the Inspired.

Be this as it may, in the midst of these struggles he found, in Antoine Court, a constant defender and a devoted friend. Antoine Court knew him well and rendered justice to the rectitude of his character and the sincerity of his sentiments, never forgetting the efficient aid that Du Plan had rendered him in the commencement of a career sown with perils of all kinds.

Thus he rendered his acknowledgement.

CHAPTER V.

THE END OF ONE REIGN AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANOTHER.

1715-1716.

Some days after the Synod, Louis XIV., the great persecutor, he whom our fathers dreaded as "the flail of God," died on the 1st of September 1715. The Churches breathed again, and under a new reign hoped to see their long and cruel sufferings ameliorated. They had unknowingly just escaped a greater misfortune. Before departing from this world to appear in the presence of the Sovereign Judge, the Despot wished to crown his work of

persecution by a Declaration, which his Confessor helped him to sign. This Declaration was thus worded: "All those who declare their intention to persist and to die in the pretended Reformed Religion shall be considered as 'relaps' ¹ *whether or not they may have made abjuration*. Whereas there are still sojourning in our Kingdom many who have professed the pretended Reformed Religion, or who have been born of Protestant parents since our prohibition of the practice of the said Religion, the same is more than sufficient proof that they have embraced the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Religion without which they would not have been tolerated." ²

The Parliament of Paris, so ready heretofore to register every intolerant law, withheld, for a whole month their assent to this declaration. "Do the annals of the world offer another example of a code founded on such a fiction?" ³ On the publication of the Edict a cry of grief was uttered by every Protestant, a fervent prayer ascended to God, the Refuge of the desolate, and the death of the King was regarded by the persecuted as a providential deliverance.

What would be the conduct of the Regent? Would he ratify this odious Declaration, or would he abrogate all these cruel Edicts, that had shed

1. The canons of the Popes thus called those who had anew fallen into heresy after having abjured and been absolved by the Bishop.

2. Declaration 8th March 1715.

3. Lemontey, *Etablissement Monarchique de Louis XIV.*

innocent blood and impoverished France, by driving from her bosom the best of her children? Every thing *seemed* hopeful. The new ruler, being the son of Gaston of Orleans (the brother of Louis XIV.), and of the Princess Palatine, Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, was thus allied by blood to a Protestant King. Though Catholic by profession, Charlotte was never so in fact; she was even at heart attached to Protestantism, and often shed tears in secret over the unfortunate condition of her former co-religionists. Now that her son held in his hands the reins of power, she implored him, with truly Christian zeal, to break the chains of the Protestant slaves. The Regent liberated sixty-eight of these unfortunates; free exit from the kingdom was permitted; and the Intendants of Dauphiny, Guienne, and Languedoc received instructions to be more lenient. He appeared indeed well disposed. He deplored the fatal consequences of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes which he wished to repair by throwing open the frontiers to the French fugitives. Unfortunately he had neither the power nor the time to execute these good designs. The necessity of humouring the Episcopate, his incredulity, his natural indolence and his immoderate love of pleasure, rendered him insensible to the cries of anguish from the Huguenots, for whom his mother continued vainly to intercede. The Duke of Orleans responded vaguely to the numerous petitions of the Protestants, by saying that he hoped to find in their good

conduct cause for granting such indulgences as might be found compatible with prudence.

All at once in 1716, their hopes were dissipated, and their suspense was ended: the Regent in his turn became a persecutor. In the month of June there appeared and was posted up in all the boroughs and villages of Languedoc a Royal Decree, which revived all the restrictive laws of the preceding reign against the assemblies, the ministers and the preachers. Great was the dismay of the Huguenots. Antoine Court became the interpreter of his brethren in an apology which he wrote to Roquelaure; he therein protested their loyalty to the Throne; he said they were not seditious, that they only solicited permission to have full liberty to worship the God of their fathers in the Desert. "Moreover," continued he, "whatever reception might be given to their petition, they were resolved neither to abandon their assemblies, nor to renounce that faith for which they had so long sacrificed their lives; what sufferings soever should be reserved for them, they would die without murmuring, and nothing should root out from their hearts the sentiment of love which they cherished for the King and the Monarchy."

The answer to this courageous appeal was an increase of persecution. The frontier was again barred to the refugees who, under the illusory hope of happier days, had hastened to return to their country. The dragonnades recommenced. In 1717, an assembly was surprised near Anduze and seventy-four persons were seized and conducted to

Montpellier. Of this number twenty-two men were condemned to the galleys and the women to prison. The executioner received orders to erect in the *Place* of Anduze a post upon which was to be inscribed the names of the prisoners.

These severe measures narrowly missed producing a revolt. Such an irreparable misfortune was prevented by Antoine Court. By his preaching, by the numerous Synods, and by the influence of his friends, he succeeded in calming the minds of the people. He endeavoured to obtain liberty, not so much by violence, like the Camisards, as by resignation like the early Christians. He himself set the example on a memorable occasion, which we recall, because it affords us the opportunity of introducing the hero of our history.

In 1718 the young preacher Etienne Arnaud, on his return from an Assembly which he had convoked in the environs of Alais, was arrested by soldiers. He was a young man of great promise. Originally of St. Hippolyte de la Planquette, he had sought refuge in Switzerland after the defeat of the Camisards, had since returned to France in company with Cortiez and had devoted himself to the evangelization of his co-religionists. Court soon became attached to him, and we have seen him sitting with a small number of preachers at the Synod of 1715. He had also become the friend of Du Plan who was in the habit of receiving him at his house, and also of helping him.

The news of the seizure of Arnaud produced a painful impression among the Huguenots, who had appreciated his character and his precocious talents. A detachment of not more than forty soldiers was to conduct him from Alais to Montpellier. A few resolute men resolved upon lying in ambush on the road in order to rescue the young preacher. But before putting this plan into execution they consulted Court. Court loved Arnaud as a brother and would have given his life to save him. He did not, however, believe it right to encourage the conspirators in their project, which he forbade them to put into execution, "preferring to see a brother seal with his blood the truths he had preached, rather than risk plunging the country into agitation by giving him his liberty to edify the people once more."

Du Plan endeavoured in another way to save his young friend from death. He wrote to the Court imploring its favour. The Court responded favourably to this appeal, and gave orders accordingly to the judges of Montpellier; but the cruel Intendant Baviile,¹ determined not to let his prey escape him, had transported Arnaud from the prison of Montpellier to that of Nismes, as he counted much on the unscrupulous subservience of the judges at that place. Time pressed; Du Plan wrote to the sister of Arnaud who was at Paris, and advised her of the steps to be taken to obtain the liberty of her brother. These were completely successful, but

1. Arnaud was the last victim of this cruel Intendant who had done so much mischief to our Churches.

unfortunately too late. Baviile used his influence to constrain the judges, who were devoted to him, to try, and to condemn Arnaud, and caused him to be hung on the *Place de la Maréchale* at Alais. The young martyr submitted to his cruel fate with a heroic firmness which drew tears from the Governor, the Jesuit who assisted him, and even from the executioner himself.

The following is the touching letter written by Du Plan to the mother of Arnaud, then a refugee at Geneva, eight days after the execution of the young preacher :—

“ My dear Sister in Jesus Christ,

“ After having debated in my mind several days whether to write to you, or not, I have thought it my duty to disregard all opposing considerations, and to do so. As you interest yourself so much in all that relates to the Church, and particularly in everything connected with our well beloved younger brother, and as I love you so well, it is a pleasure to me to inform you of all that transpires of any importance in this country. You will learn then, my dear sister, that this faithful confessor of the truth, after having been kept prisoner about a month, during which time all those who loved religion and who knew him offered up their prayers to God for his deliverance, has been condemned to a death the least cruel of all those which justice can inflict. The sentence was pronounced at Nimes and executed at Alais. Never was seen victim more tranquil and more resigned to death than this poor lamb. His most cruel enemies were painfully affected; nearly everyone shed tears. The Jesuit, though his importunate exhortations were repeatedly repulsed was obliged to confess that if he had been in the Romish Church he would have been regarded as a martyr; the officer who had charge of him, and even a police

officer, and many others, told me that he spoke and died like a saint; the executioner in tears acknowledged that he had put to death an angel. I cannot indeed tell you all the good which has been said of this dear young brother; his gentleness, his patience, and his charity, have so gained and so softened the heart of all, that no person dare speak any evil concerning him, without exposing himself to the scorn and hatred of the public. I have no doubt, my dear sister, that you will submit with joy to the Will of heaven which had predestinated your dear son to be among the number of the martyrs. Men have only executed the Decrees of God; we must adore with pious submission that invisible Hand which rules with an unerring wisdom all the events which transpire in this world. We might in truth be sad while the dear lamb was among the wolves; our tears seemed reasonable; but now that he is among the glorified saints, where he contemplates the face of his Saviour, and where he is ravished with joy, we should be indeed blind, ungrateful and unjust to regret his happiness; God forbid! It would be necessary to disown the faith which teaches us that they are blessed who have suffered for truth, and are dead in the Lord; yea certainly, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. I know, I have seen, and I am with others witness to the fact that this dear young brother conquered and died as a faithful servant of God. I believe, and am assured that the Lord according to the truth of His promises has admitted him into His Kingdom of Glory, to receive part of His inheritance. It is this which consoles me in the affliction I have felt in being deprived of his presence. I rejoice indeed with him, in the hope that I shall soon rejoin him there, where he is for ever praising, blessing, and glorifying my Saviour and my God. You no doubt agree, my dear sister, in these sentiments: You dwell in a place where you have favorable opportunities for confirming yourself in them; I beseech you never to neglect them; every day with the help of that grace which never fails those who ask for it as they should, increase in holiness, and be assured

that you will soon see the accomplishment of the promises which God has made to His Church and especially to him who calls himself always with much esteem, sincerity, and affection, my very dear sister in Jesus Christ,

"Your very humble brother and servant,

"BENJ. . . . D. . . .

"If the martyr had wished to redeem his life at the expense of his conscience he could have done so.

"Nîmes, 1st of February, 1718."

CHAPTER VI.

CARDINAL ALBÉRONI AND SCIPION SOULAN.

1719.

A grave event proved to the Regent in a striking manner the peaceable character of the Huguenots of his kingdom.

At this period, war having broken out between France and Spain, the ambitious and intriguing Cardinal Albéroni, minister of Philip V., conceived the idea of stirring up the Protestants of Languedoc to create troubles in France during the progress of which she might be attacked on the frontier. To this end he made use of a certain Scipion Soulan, born at St. Hilaire, near Alais. He was a young man, twenty-five years of age, a gambler and a libertine who had roamed about the world and tried every profession. After having fought in his youth with the Camisards he had enrolled himself in the same regiment as Du Plan. It was there that Du Plan had known him. Being expelled for theft he left for Venice; from thence he went into Spain where he

offered his services to Albéroni. The Duke of Orleans was alarmed and feared a general insurrection. He immediately negotiated with Basnage, formerly a pastor of Rouen, who had retired into Holland since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and with Professor Pictet of Geneva, in order to induce them to use their influence with their co-religionists of Languedoc, to prevent an insurrection. Pictet and Basnage wrote immediately; they bade their brethren entertain respect for and loyalty to the Sovereign and counselled them to suspend the assemblies. Their letters appeared in profusion in Poitou and Languedoc, and caused the greatest surprise. Antoine Court, who knew nothing of the affair of Soulan and the conspiracy of Albéroni, hastened to respond by a long and beautiful letter to the Pastor of La Haye. He therein declared the loyalty of his brethren towards the King, but at the same time their firm resolution to continue to serve God in the Desert.

"We will," he said, "to our last hour, while rendering to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, render to God that which is God's. Our assemblies are not riotous, and we do not carry arms; we have carefully forbidden them under pain of high treason not only human but divine!" (1719.)

The Regent did not limit his efforts to the negotiations with Basnage and Pictet. He conferred with the Marquis de Duquesne who was then at Paris. The Marquis selected a Protestant Nobleman of Dauphiny, M. Genac de Beaulieu, to go among the Protestants in order to sound them and prevent insurrection. This gentleman came to Nismes, and conferred with

the leading men amongst the Huguenots, Nobles and merchants, who were all astonished at the fears of the Court and assured him of their loyalty. M. de Beaulieu, according to his instructions, demanded for a time the cessation of their religious assemblies. They replied that this did not depend upon them, and that it was necessary to speak to the ministers who convoked the assemblies. M. de Beaulieu then addressed himself to Antoine Court, who at that time was taking the mineral waters at Euzet, appointing a meeting at Durfort. Court wrote immediately to Du Plan, whom he always consulted on grave affairs, and M. de Beaulieu, having failed to attend the rendez-vous at Durfort under pretext that he feared to exceed his orders, Du Plan went to confer with him at Nismes. Before leaving, the pious emissary, feeling the need of the help of the Church, wrote to his friend and the Elders recommending himself and his mission to their prayers.

He wrote the following letter to the Elders :—

To Messieurs my good friends, wheresoever they are.

Messieurs and dear brethren,

"I await your news with impatience. I have received the letter of our brother Court which has given me much pleasure, displaying as it does his resolution to sustain the interests and the glory of God in reference to the assemblies. I believe, Messieurs, that you all hold the same sentiments ; the chief thing is to observe carefully the rules, the moderation, and the maxims of Jesus Christ, Who was full of gentleness, humility, charity, holiness and zeal for the advancement of His Father's glory. Persevere, my very dear

brethren, in the good work which the Lord has put in your hands. Be faithful unto Him and you will undoubtedly see in our days the Church flourish in this kingdom in spite of Satan, the world and the flesh. God permits His enemies to walk the face of the earth in order to prove the righteous, but the wicked shall be consumed to give place to a nation of righteousness who shall glorify God in spirit and in truth.

"I received yesterday evening, my dear brethren, a letter from M. Plantier, by an express, which informed me that M. . . . wished to have an interview with me before leaving, in order to render an account of his commission, but the affair presses and I have not a day to spare. Le Sieur Plantier judged it apropos that M. Court and others should be at the rendez-vous, but as he left the thing to my direction. I have not thought it right to expose you to danger; I know well enough your sentiments on all our affairs. I shall act as your representative and afterwards render to you an exact account of our conference. I pray you, my very dear brethren, as the business is delicate and of great importance, not to forget in all your prayers to ask Him Who is your Interpreter to give me His Spirit, that I may speak with wisdom and with power, in behalf of the interests of the Church which He has redeemed by His blood.

"Remember the fast of the 7th of September. I pray that God may sustain and animate you by His spirit and that by His grace He may soon make us to unite, without fear of our enemies, in sounding glorious Alleluias to the Eternal, our God. I am always, very sincerely, your very humble and obedient servant."

May 1719.

"BENJAMIN."

On arriving at Nismes, Du Plan first held a few conferences with the chief citizens, merchants, and noblemen of the neighbourhood who, though not openly, were at heart Protestants. They advised suspending the assemblies. Du Plan rejected this

with indignation, and at the close of the conference he wrote to the Marquis de Duquesne, in the name of the Churches, to assure the Court of their fidelity, but to affirm also, that they would at any price render to God that which belonged to God in glorifying Him in the assemblies. As to Soulan, if he came into Languedoc to excite the people, Du Plan promised to arrest and deliver him over to justice, on condition that he should not be put to death.

The Marquis de Duquesne communicated this letter to the Regent or to the chief Minister; it was declared to be satisfactory and M. de Beaulieu assured the Nobleman of Alais that the cessation of the assemblies would no longer be insisted upon.

This news was not long in being disseminated among the faithful. The heart of Court expanded with joy. The past was forgotten, the future was full of hope. The Court convinced at last that the Protestants were not rebels, would surely relax its rigorous measures and put a stop to cruel and causeless persecution. A Synod was immediately convoked for the 21st of March 1719, and it was thereat resolved to write two letters to M. de Beaulieu; the one relating to the assemblies and the other to the devotion of the Protestants to the King.

Du Plan, not having been able to be present at this reunion, considered it his duty to write to his colleagues, to recommend continued patience, resignation and fidelity.

"To the Pastors, Elders and Brethren, assembled for the glory of God and the edification of the Church,

"Messieurs my very dear and honored brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ, the peace, grace and love of our Saviour God be with you.

"Being unable, for reasons which I cannot put in writing, to take part in the Assembly of which two of you have done me the honor to inform me, I shall increase my prayers to God, to the end that His spirit may preside over it in an especial manner for the glory of His Great and Holy name, for the edification of His church, for the confusion of Satan, and for the destruction of Anti-Christ and his agents. I hope through the mercy of God that my prayers will have more effect than my presence, and that your charity and discretion will convince you that my absence is based on sound reasons. For I regard it as an honor and a glory to be united with the faithful servants of Jesus Christ, though the world scorns, calumniates, and persecutes them. I am ready even, if it be necessary, with the help and grace of my God, to sacrifice worldly goods, temporal honors, and life for the service of His church.

"Before giving you my advice on the business which you will discuss, it is well that I should inform you that the authorities are not ignorant of your names; they know all that happens in the country. For this reason it is more necessary than ever to redouble our prayers to God, to the end that He may change the heart of our enemies in our favor. Our brother Court knows that we have informed the Court of our innocence and loyalty to the King, but that is not enough. It is necessary that we be loyal to God and that we have in view in all our actions only the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbours; it is necessary that His law and commandments should be written in our hearts, before we presume to publish them to His people. Woe to him who, after having shown to others the way of salvation, falls himself into the abyss of perdition.

"The Commandant and the Intendant of the Province

are travelling through the towns and villages of the country ; it is well that I should remain where I am, to learn if possible from their speech and conversation, whether we have yet to suffer, or whether we may hope for some alleviation of our sufferings. I will inform you of all on the first opportunity.

" I have learned, my dear brethren, that you assemble, not alone to take necessary measures for the edification of the Church but to anticipate the cunning of the Devil who is always seeking to raise divisions among you. It is of the utmost importance that you should be united among yourselves, for you know that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. In the name of God, think of your latter end ; let each one guard his secret thoughts ; God knows your intentions ; if you work for His glory and not for your own interests, God will prepare for you an eternal glory and great happiness ; but if unhappily anyone allows himself to be blindly seduced by his self-love, in seeking the esteem and approbation of men and the ease and pleasures of the flesh, God will confound him, and permit him to fall into the hands of men or of demons, who will cause him to perish. In the name of God, my dear brethren, let each one examine himself ! If anyone is reputed to possess any thing or any talent which does not glorify God, he is unworthy to bear the name of Christian ; he who is the most endowed with grace and virtue, let him be the most humble and charitable ; let him not raise his voice in the assembly with bitterness against his brother, when he has erred in ecclesiastical discipline, but endeavour with gentleness to bring him back into the right path ! It is thus that Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd, Whom we should imitate, acts towards us when we wander.

" The unhappy state of our affairs does not permit us to use rigorous excommunication. Declare however in the midst of the assembly of Pastors and Elders that you will leave to the justice of God the first who shall infringe by pride, or by a schismatic, heretical or calumniating spirit, against the rules you have established, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the advancement

of His reign and the good of His Church ! After this the faithful pastors may rest in the assurance that Providence will avenge in a terrible manner any outrages against its glory.

“ Although I believe that in these Synodal Assemblies you are careful to implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit, bear with me if I exhort you to be more frequent in prayer than you have hitherto been. This is necessary for several reasons : first, because you know that except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it, and that it is useless to make wise laws if the Lord does not bless your efforts by diffusing His love in your hearts to observe them : secondly, because we are under the cross and always in danger of falling into the hands of our enemies who would delight in sacrificing us to their hatred : and lastly, because I believe it to be true that God is ready to manifest His power and His compassion on behalf of His Church, if we are careful frequently to humble ourselves in His presence, to pray for His help, and to render thanks for all the good that we have received from His bountiful Hand.

“ I pray you to be so good as to send me before separating an abstract of the resolutions you may adopt. I commend myself to your earnest prayers ; do not forget me in your assemblies or in private ; since I never forget you when I offer my supplications to God. God bless and sanctify you, and God render you faithful in the ministry which He has committed to you ; God render you more and more capable of edifying and consoling His afflicted Church ! God at length grant that you may obtain an entire victory, over the world, the flesh and the devil and that you may inherit the Crown of righteousness which I wish for you with all my soul, as being, Messieurs and my dear and well beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, your humble and affectionate servant.

May 1719.

“ BENJAMIN.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE PESTILENCE OF ALAIS.

1720—1721.

What was the result of all these courageous protestations of fidelity towards the Prince? The Court was so much perplexed with Spain that the persecution appeared to abate. The assemblies could be attended without being seriously disturbed by the troops. Nevertheless neither the edicts nor the ordinances had been abrogated; they were always suspended, like the sword of Damocles, over the heads of the pastors and the faithful, as these did not fail soon to discover. When Spain had been subdued, and though there was no dread of a new crusade from the Camisards, the Court renewed against Protestantism the work of destruction undertaken by Louis XIV. In Brittany, Dauphiny, Poitou, and Languedoc, and wherever Huguenots were found, their assemblies were dispersed and the preachers rigorously hunted.

Bernage had succeeded Baille as Intendant of Languedoc, a change that for the Protestants of the South was only a change of executioners. The new Intendant sought to surpass in zeal, that is to say in cruelty, his predecessor of sinister memory. Accompanied by the Duke de Roquelaure, he visited the province, summoned before him the chief Protestants of each town and forbade them to hold their assemblies under pain of incurring the anger

of the Regent. One year had scarcely elapsed since the brilliant promises—made by the Duke de Beaulieu—in the name of the Prince!

The troubles of the Church were now increased by the appearance of a new scourge. The pestilence which had desolated and depopulated Marseilles spread with an incredible rapidity to Provence and Languedoc. In 1721 it broke out at Alais, and there made great ravages. The wise measures adopted by the magistrates checked its progress. "A cordon of troops was formed to prevent communication with the other towns. No one was allowed either to go in or out; infirmaries were established outside the town, where persons who were attacked by the sickness were carried and quarantine was instituted in the country houses of the environs: all those who had communicated with the infected, and all the contents of the houses where the pestilence had resulted in death were fumigated. The persons to whom this work was intrusted as well as those who interred the bodies, had no communication with the other inhabitants, all of whom were shut up, each family in its own house, and not allowed to go out without incurring the severest penalties. The Catholics were also forbidden to assemble more than twelve persons at one time in their churches."¹

The ravages of the scourge revived the zeal of the religious; the Protestants saw in it a judgment of God to punish the infidelity of His

1. Bonnal Olive. *Notice sur Alais.*

people. The Pastors, entirely occupied in visiting and caring for their sick, entertained for a moment the idea of suspending the assemblies, but the faithful protested, and in spite of the general interdict hastened into the desert to edify and humble themselves. The rich, more alarmed than the poor, displayed an extreme zeal; the preaching bore happy results, and the young people openly manifested sentiments of repentance. "At the sight of this spiritual resurrection," wrote Court in 1721, "it appears that new blood circulates in the veins of the Protestants, and that a new spirit animates their body. Satan falls like lightning from heaven." The Churches of Lozère, the Pont-de-Montvert, Saint Julien d'Arpaon, and Cassagnas made great progress; it was necessary to increase the number of the Elders of the Churches of Lasalle, Saumane and Alais; and the town of Ganges, which had been very remiss, returned again to the faith.

During all the time of the scourge, the zeal and devotion of Benjamin Du Plan were redoubled and his health in consequence became impaired, and for years after he suffered from the excessive fatigues which he endured during this terrible calamity. He continued his religious *réunions* with the tacit permission of Mgr. d'Avéjan, Bishop of Alais; but the Governor of the town and the Commandant of the troops were greatly irritated at it. "They knew all that I did," Du Plan tells us himself; "the officers and soldiers seeing me pass along the streets pointed to me with their finger saying to their

comrades, 'there is the minister of the Huguenots.' Although these things were told me, I went from time to time as usual to the surprise of everybody, to visit the Bishop, the Governor, and even the Jesuits; but that which above all surprized one day the Ecclesiastics, who were instigating the Bishop against me with great zeal, were the Prelates own words, afterwards reported to me by a gentleman who was present : 'Let him alone, he is my principal curate.' "

Such tolerance at that time and from individuals so exalted can only be explained by the intimate and friendly relations which united the family of Du Plan with the great personages of the town, and in particular with the Marquis de la Fare, a relation of the Bishop d'Avejan.

Yet the public misfortunes scarcely abated the persecution; the assemblies were hunted down, the galleys were crowded with new slaves and the Tower of Constance with new prisoners. It is especially mentioned that one assembly was surprised in a place called the *Torrent du Cadereau*, a locality situated near Nismes, fifty persons were arrested and shut up in the fort of Nismes, three were condemned to the galleys and nineteen were transported to the Mississippi.

CHAPTER VIII.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN AND THE VESSONNIENS.

1721—1724.

The year 1721 was for Du Plan a particularly unfortunate one. To the two scourges, the pestilence and the persecution, was added a quarrel in the Church on the subject of the Inspired. This quarrel broke out during the absence of Antoine Court, who had set out for Geneva in 1720. The object of his journey was to dissipate the prejudices of the pastors and the faithful of that Church against their co-religionists of France. The former had falsely accused the preachers of exposing the Protestants without necessity, by obstinately holding illicit assemblies in the Desert; they reproached them also with fomenting revolt against the King and with permitting themselves to be carried away by the ridiculous eccentricities of visionaries and the Inspired. Court conquered all these prejudices, and revived the interest and zeal with which the faithful of Geneva had never ceased to regard their brethren of France, notwithstanding the menaces and the restrictive measures of the King. He was away two years. During this time his flock, their sufferings and misfortunes were the constant objects of his sympathy and solicitude. He had confided them to faithful hands. Cortiez replaced him, and Benjamin Du Plan used redoubled activity and zeal. But his absence appeared too long. Cortiez, overworked, and no longer equal to the task, wrote

letter after letter to his colleague to hasten his return ; Du Plan was no less pressing ; Antoine Court replied to the Gentleman of Alais :

“ Monsieur,

“ I have the honor to acknowledge your valuable letter in which I have seen with renewed pleasure that you show the same piety and the same zeal which God has so long scattered abundantly in your soul: you have always followed the salutary movements that inspired these virtues in a heart which gloried in their possession. By the one you have defended the interest and the truth of religion, and by the other you have taught its followers in your own person that nothing is contained in its precepts which it is not easy to practice. By one of these virtues I see you sacrificing ease, goods, honor and, if requisite, life itself, to the salvation of your brethren, in communicating to them the light and the knowledge with which Heaven inspires you ; by the other you show me that there is nothing, however difficult in appearance, which is not easy of accomplishment to a true soul, and a noble and generous heart ; and by both you encourage me to hasten the resumption of my duties in our afflicted Churches ; you represent the necessity in a manner so touching and pathetic, so elevated and sublime, that it is difficult to reply. You further accompany the whole by your own example, so that I seem to hear your voice (which would no doubt be the case were it not for your great modesty and low estimation of all that you do however great or praiseworthy it may be) saying : ‘What, my brother, will you see me abandon the ease and the repose which I enjoyed in my home, will you see me sacrifice the delights and advantages which surrounded my life in my native town, will you see me, who am so tender and delicate, exposed henceforth to the burning heat of summer and the sharp frosts of winter, sleeping sometimes in a wood, sometimes in a cavern, sometimes among straw, and sometimes in another place still worse ; and will you who ought

to be already accustomed to these hardships, remain where you are, preferring the ease and advantages of life in a city? I admit these advantages are great, and have no doubt they possess charms and attractions which render their abandonment difficult. But even if the charms and attractions were greater ought you not, after my example, (though mine might have had no parallel to yours), to renounce them as promptly as I have done, since we work together for the same object, since the very reasons that have decided me to make the sacrifice I have made ought to decide you to make that of which I speak, and since, in a word, we ought both to adopt the same career. If my example should not have force enough, have you not your beloved flock who eagerly ask for you? Do you not hear their feeble voice, growing weaker by calling you? does not your conscience tell you what to do, and conjure you in the tenderest manner to come and use the talents with which Providence has endowed you for their instruction and consolation'?

"To this imaginary voice I would reply by asking why am I urged by so many powerful reasons and interested motives to hasten my return; have I no desire for it, and this desire is it not a fire whose flame burns and consumes my soul? Do I not long for the wings of the eagle to fly to my poor sheep, not to tear them with my claws, but to gather them under the wings of the Gospel, and to preach to them the consolations, promises, and hopes that it gives us? Have I not often prayed with the Church that the heavens might open, but on this occasion do I not pray that they may open in a different sense in order to shew me a way by which I may have free access to our mountains; do I not watch for this way? Is not my departure the constant subject of my meditation? I think of it night and day, and wish for nothing so much as to follow our dear colleagues with the crook in my hand, leading and pasturing our flocks in the grassy folds of the Truth and on the verdant banks of the inexhaustible springs of water leading to life eternal. Whilst I prepare myself for this journey, pray to God that He

may shew me the way by which I should pass ; that He may inspire me with the courage I need ; that He may preserve me from all grievous accidents, and that He may disperse all the obstacles which oppose themselves in my path ; join to all this your wise counsels.

I fear being recognised on the way. It is necessary to render an account everywhere one goes, even in the smallest village—who you are, whence you come, and whither you go. Let me know what precautions I ought to take, and by what road it will be easiest for me to enter the province. I shall wait with impatience the honor of your reply to the above. Meanwhile I embrace you with Christian affection, and I beseech you to believe me with all the tenderness and zeal possible,

“ Monsieur, your very humble and very obedient servant,

“ A. C.”

Benjamin Du Plan had personal reasons for desiring the prompt return of Antoine Court. His relations with the Inspired had provoked against him the party of Ecclesiastical Order, at whose head was Cortiez. Cortiez had no great affection for Benjamin DuPlan, not that he failed to recognise his numerous merits, but he mistrusted his ideas on inspiration and accused him of fomenting division in the Church. Had this accusation any foundation ? Had not Du Plan, from the first, encouraged Antoine Court in his work of revival ? Had he not aided him, not alone by his counsel, but also by his influence ? Had he not taken part regularly in all the Synods and Conferences, supervised the deliberations, and written in the common name either to the Regent

or to foreign Princes? Was it possible to find a better Huguenot, and at the same time a Christian more able and more devoted? What then was his crime? Why, during the absence of Antoine Court, did Cortiez incite the faithful against the pious nobleman? We have already said it was because the latter associated with the Inspired: his social position and his personal qualities gave to this obscure party, composed in general of ignorant persons, a lustre and relief it did not merit. Let us add that the extravagances of some members of this party and, above all, the revolt of two of its principal chiefs, Vesson and Huc, against the established order, appeared to justify all the rigours of Cortiez.

The influence of Vesson and Huc at this time was so considerable, and Du Plan suffered so much from the troubles they occasioned, that a brief sketch of their lives may not be deemed superfluous.

Vesson was a native of De Cros, near Saint Hippolyte. He set himself up as a preacher and said he was inspired. He preached in the desert and fell into ecstasies, and held his assemblies so imprudently that they were often surprised by the soldiers. Scarcely had he signed the rules of the Synod of 1715, when he refused to submit to them. His independent spirit could not bend to any human judge. He re-appeared no more at the Synodal reunions and, though he was not ordained, he took the liberty of administering the Sacrament and of convoking assemblies. A Synod held in February 1718 summoned him to its bar, and as he refused to

appear he was deprived of his functions, and denounced as a schismatic. It decided nevertheless that he should be re-instated in his office of preacher if he would express regret for his conduct. The month following, Vesson at a conference made a public apology through Cortiez, Rouvière and Antoine Court. But his natural impetuosity and impatience of all restraint carried him away anew, and he fell again into the same faults; he violated the established rules, and sought partisans among the Inspired, who were enemies of all discipline. A Synod, convoked in 1720, tried him and suspended him from his functions. This was considered a bold act by some who feared that the consequences might prove fatal to the Church, as Vesson, making use of his popularity, might create a schism and increase the difficulties of the situation. The Protestants were decimated by persecution and by the pestilence; was it well that they should be divided among themselves and present to their mortal enemies the spectacle of discord? Du Plan raised his voice, not to defend Vesson, on the contrary he blamed him severely and sanctioned his excommunication, but endeavoured to appease angry spirits, and to arouse in irritated hearts sentiments of charity, peace and moderation. His intentions were misunderstood, he was confounded with those whose cause he appeared to support, laymen and preachers included him in the same condemnation with which they had condemned Vesson and his partisans. Unfortunately

Court was absent and he alone was able to clear his friend from these unjust accusations.

The fears entertained by some were realised. The Synodal decision brought the irritation of the Inspired to a climax ; they separated themselves from the Church and gathered round Vesson and Huc whom they henceforth considered as their chiefs. Vesson went into Lower Languedoc and Huc into the Cevennes.

Huc Mazel, otherwise Mazelet, was well advanced in years. A native of Génolhac, he had been one of the first of the Camisards to raise the standard of revolt, and though he could neither read nor write he had preached with great success before the soldiers of Roland. The war having terminated, he fled into Switzerland, but his desire for adventure induced him to return to France, where he held some intercourse with the Catholics of Montpellier. It was there, probably, that he imbibed the doctrines respecting the resurrection, and the peculiar ideas on other subjects which afterwards caused anxiety to his colleagues. Placed in communication with Antoine Court he became, with Vesson, one of his first fellow labourers and signed the Synodal rules of 1715. But this act was soon forgotten, and in 1719 he propounded strange ideas on the question of Protestant marriages, affirming that it was permissible, without sinning, to be married at the Church and to sign the abjurations, of which the clergy had established the form, under the fallacious pretext that it was possible to abjure the heresies of Calvin.

without abjuring the religion of Jesus Christ. A Synod convoked in 1719 suspended and deposed him for having violated the rules. But this ignorant and self-opiniated old man, instead of submitting went into the Upper Cevennes, where he endeavoured to propagate his dangerous doctrines.

Such were the two chiefs who put themselves at the head of the Inspired. Under these circumstances Cortiez, who did not spare Benjamin Du Plan, wrongfully held him responsible for all these disorders. He called a Synod in 1721, at which Vesson was again put under the ban of the Church; Du Plan had been summoned and was compelled to render an account of his conduct and of his relations with the adversaries of ecclesiastical discipline. The Gentleman of Alais bowed respectfully before the remonstrances of his colleagues, but he did not adhere less firmly to his convictions, or make any perceptible change in his conduct.

Antoine Court suffered greatly on hearing of the severe act of discipline which had been directed against his pious friend. He was more irritated than ever against the extravagancies and fanaticisms of the sect. "Whenever," he wrote, "I think of these people ascribing to the Spirit of the Lord their foolish imaginings, and the extravagancies that they have committed, and of which I have often been a witness, a shivering takes possession of my whole person, my flesh creeps, my hair stands on end, my heart trembles, and I fear that a thunderbolt may descend from heaven to destroy the miserable

creatures who have dared to call the Holy Spirit the author of all these things.”¹ From Geneva, he wrote a letter in which, following the commandment of St. Paul,² he rebuked the women who interfered with preaching. This is not saying that he condemned them to be absolutely dumb. “When there shall be no pastors in a district,” he said, “let the women win over by persuasion and restore the backsliders; let them console the afflicted, visit the sick, instruct the young, and strengthen the weak; let them do all this,” he added, “by private conversation, but let them never take the liberty of preaching like doctors in a duly convoked assembly.”

In order to give greater weight to his remonstrances he besought Professor Pictet to write on the same subject. The Professor thereupon published his famous letter “On those who believe themselves inspired.” Pictet enjoyed great authority, and his letter, recognised and supported by the Venerable Company of Pastors of Geneva, produced immense sensation. Vesson was shunned, and his most devoted partisans abandoned him. Having no further means of existence, crippled by debt, followed by his creditors, and prosecuted by the Synods, he had recourse to expedients in order to live and to maintain his numerous family. We meet with him again at Montpellier, chief of a ridiculous sect which caused his ruin and indirectly brought about the flight and exile of Benjamin Du Plan.

1. M.S.S. de Court, Letter of 6th June 1721 to M^{lle}. Simart.

2. I Cor. XIV, 34.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MULTIPLIANTS.

1723.

In 1721 there lived at Montpellier a widow named Verchand, originally of Sommières. This lady had had during a journey in the Cevennes a strange vision in which she pretended to have seen God Himself. On returning to Montpellier she began a correspondence with Benjamin Du Plan whose reputation for piety had spread far. Believing that she desired his counsel and advice, he wrote several letters to her in which he spoke "of the great matter of the reign of God and the deliverance of the Church, and asked the Almighty to accord to her more and more the light and virtue of His spirit and to reveal to her the great mysteries of His love."

At this time the pestilence was raging in Montpellier, and the faithful everywhere felt the need of uniting to strengthen themselves in the faith. Mme. Verchand opened her house to them, and it was soon filled with the preachers and the prophets of the neighbourhood; she became a focus of resistance to the disciplinary decisions of the Synod of 1721 against Vesson, and in general against the Inspired. The brethren Comte of Lunel, and Bonicel of Pont-de-Montvert transformed this society into a sect, the leaders of which denied all spiritual authority and

recognised no other guide than their own inspiration. It was to this odd sect that Vesson affiliated himself.

On the day of his reception, the 25th of December, 1722, he received the imposition of hands from the three chief priests, Bonicel, Bourelly (a young lad of sixteen years), and Antoine Comte, and bound himself "to serve them as minister and preacher, to do nothing without their advice, to be entirely and always at their command, and finally, to uphold the Ark of Truth."

Through his mediation, the little community entered immediately into correspondence with the towns where the rebel preacher counted his warmest partisans. Mme. Verchand wrote again to Du Plan; she tried to induce him to come, and offered him the presidency of the Church. But Du Plan had too much good sense to allow himself to be seduced. The presence of the schismatic Vesson was alone sufficient to show him his duty. He replied to Mme. Verchand, advising her to abandon these fanciful projects, and to separate herself from the imposters who surrounded her, as they could but compromise her and lead her to ruin. His foresight was soon justified.

On the 6th of March, 1723, the house of Mme. Verchand was invaded by a detachment of soldiers. At the moment they entered the apartment in which the sectarians celebrated their strange rites, there were in the house thirteen persons,—six men, six women and a young lad. One of the six men wore, like a priest, an aube, on which

was placed a sort of shoulder belt; he had also a cap resembling a helmet and the whole was decorated with aigrettes and surrounded with golden paper; he held in his hand a reed which served as staff to a silken banner. Another individual was habited in a dress of greyish brown; he was furnished with a baton at the end of which was a circular disk of pasteboard surrounded by laurels and containing on each face an inscription in large characters. As to the women, they wore black caps bordered with silvery white taffetas, each cap ornamented with an aigrette attached by a green ribbon.

The interior of the house was as fanciful as its inmates. The first room was decorated with laurels, to which were attached apples, oranges, lemons, and bottles of wine and brandy. On the door was this inscription; "It is ordained by God that the door shall be shut against all who come here and refuse to be searched, and woe to them who suffer it not!" The first room led to a second which was the sanctuary, called by the sectarians the "New Zion." All round was suspended a cordon of *fleurs de lis* in golden paper. In the middle stood a chair raised by four steps decorated with laurels, ribbons, and inscriptions in Hebrew. The ceiling was hung in white and in the centre was a representation of the sun with this inscription in Latin: "This is the true way." There was further discovered in this room a dish surrounded by a napkin, the four ends of which were fastened with ribbons of different colours, and near the window was a

square table, furnished with a bell, an inkstand, and a Bible. The top of this table was covered with emblematical designs, such as scales, heart, and compass. Each object had its signification. The laurels represented the triumph of the Church; the oranges figured the plenty which should abound during the reign of Jesus Christ; the white taffetas suspended from the ceiling and the looped ribbons of four colours were the wedding garments of the Holy Spirit, and the chair represented the mountain of Horeb. Behold into what speculations and to what a mad end the successors of the first Inspired had been gradually led by their disordered brains!

These wretched men speedily brought about their own ruin. Convicted of having violated the Royal Edicts which prohibited the assemblies, they were condemned. Vesson, in the hope of escaping death, offered to betray his co-religionists to the government, and for this service he demanded secrecy and five hundred crowns; the work might be most conveniently done at Easter, when the Huguenots assembled themselves in Synod; he would then present himself before them and announce his miraculous escape. Bernage scorned the propositions of the traitor and condemned him to death with Bonicel, Antoine Comte and a prophetess of the sect. On the 22nd of April, they were taken from the citadel clad in their shirts only, a wax taper in their hands and a rope round their necks. Conducted to the front of the Chapel of the Citadel, and then before the Cross of the Esplanade, they suffered the extreme

penalty of the law, and were hung on gibbets erected on the *Place*. The other prisoners were sent to the King's galleys for life. Mme. Verchand, Jeanne Mazaurigue and Suzanne Loubière, were compelled to witness the execution of their accomplices and were afterwards confined in the Tower of Constance. Anne Gaussent, whose only crime was that of having attended the assemblies without having shared in the ceremonies, was also confined in the Tower. The house was rased and there remained nothing of the sect of the Multipliants but the name, which had been given to the street in which the house was situated.

Some weeks after the execution of Vesson, the aged Huc, his old friend, was put to death in the same manner, and at the same place. Arrested in a house near St. Paul-la-Coste, in the Cevennes, he was conducted to the Citadel of Montpellier where Vesson had already been confined. The old man was accused of having presided at assemblies, and of preaching : convicted of the double crime, he was condemned to be hung. We are acquainted with his adventures, and the versatility of his opinions; his ideas concerning marriage, and his catholic tendencies, had more than once been the object of synodal and disciplinary decisions; the obstinate old man had resisted and seceded and had at length become with Vesson a chief of the new sect. At the last moment, under the pressure of urgent solicitations, he disowned his past life and abjured his religion. He hoped this tardy abjuration would save

him. In every respect he was mistaken; on the 5th of May, in the midst of an extraordinary excitement he was hanged, and died with great resignation. His funeral was pompous. Proud of their conquest of a preacher, a thing they were not accustomed to, the Catholics pressed in crowds to his interment. Two hundred penitents marched at the head of the procession, and six Franciscan friars carried the bier. On each side of the cortege numerous ecclesiastics collected alms from the faithful, and lastly, to crown this successful work, the body of the old apostate was placed in a vault of Notre-Dame-des-Tables.

The execution of Vesson and of Huc Mazelet was a death blow to the Inspired; after having caused great fear and mistrust they fell into ridicule and contempt. Benjamin Du Plan, who ought not to be confounded with these fanatics,—as he had always openly repudiated their opinions,—nevertheless suffered much from the sympathy with which he had regarded the best of the Inspired. It was only the prestige of his name and the éclat of his services that arrested the attacks of Pierre Cortiez and other fierce adversaries. He was compelled to defend himself with his pen against the accusation of being an accomplice in the intrigues of the men whom justice had seized, and he wrote to Antoine Court beseeching him to convoke a Synod with the view of pacifying the minds of the brethren.

* Monsieur, my dear brother in our Lord Jesus Christ :

"The wisdom, love and peace of God be with you! Since Providence and the mercy of God have sent us into

this country, to instruct, console, and fortify the faithful, we should neglect nothing which can contribute to the glory of God and the edification of the Church. It is in the time of tempest that a good pilot displays his abilities. It is in the battle that a wise and valiant general makes known his prudence and his valour. We are beaten by the storm, we are encircled by the enemy, but we must not lose courage; on the contrary, we must strengthen the weak, raise up the fallen, and bring back to the combat those who have deserted or wandered.

"I am persuaded, my dear brother, that you have good intentions. If you knew my heart, you would be persuaded that my intentions are also good. This common conviction should lead us to hope, through the mercy of God, for a happy issue to all our enterprises.

"As I ask of God with all my heart for grace to seek only His glory and the edification of the Church, I shall make no difficulty in revealing to you my thoughts, my sentiments and my projects. In the first place, I have not quitted the kingdom because God has endowed me with talents suitable to edify and to reunite the Church. I should be a coward if I abandoned the battle field, while I see there is more need of help than ever. Secondly, I was concealed and scarcely showed myself for a time because my presence made too much éclat and because I did not wish unnecessarily to irritate the minds of our adversaries, who are thirsting for our blood. Moreover, I am desirous of somewhat calming the storm, with the view of arranging a day on which to hold the Synod I believe to be so necessary, in order to bring all, if it please God, to one mind.

"Remember, my dear brother, that no divided house or kingdom can stand. The love of God is only found with those who live in, or who desire, peace. Our newly born Churches are troubled and divided; for this reason the anger of the Almighty is kindled against us, and the sword of the enemy has entered into our camp.

"I have admired, and probably you have also, the

workings of Providence, which has delivered into the hands of our enemies precisely those who had separated themselves from the body of our Churches ; but though we have been spared, let us not flatter ourselves we are innocent before God. It is even very possible that many among us are guilty of greater crimes than any committed by those who have suffered, or are suffering, in this last persecution.

" I have never upheld the rebellious and arrogant, or the heretics and schismatics. I have protested equally against Vesson and Mazelet. I have opposed, as much as my authority and my information have permitted me, both fools and fanatics. I detest impostures and superstitions, but I approve none the more the rash judgments, or bitter voices which under the appearance of piety and zeal cry, without knowledge of facts and without intelligence : Away, Away ; Crucify, Crucify ! They confound without examination the innocent with the guilty, they crucify Jesus Christ in His members among thieves and imposters. Provided the false zealots can say : 'Our religion is pure and holy,' they believe that will suffice to justify their harsh decisions, and their bad conduct. They do not bear in mind that if the Christian religion is pure and holy, it should inspire in those who profess it, wisdom, gentleness, charity and moderation ; without these virtues, however zealous they may appear, they are scarcely more reasonable than the Ephesians, who cried with all their might and without reflection ; 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians !'

" I exhort you then, my dear brother, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to write, speak, and act, to the extent of your ability for the purpose of assembling a Synod of honest, virtuous and learned persons, who will endeavour to promote unity, establish a discipline which may be observed by all, take efficacious means not alone to strengthen the weak, raise up the fallen, and bring back the wanderers, but above all, by the help of God, and after the example of the Apostles and the Reformers to spread the truth among our neighbours who are as sheep without a shepherd. I have

faith in God to believe that if we pray to Him earnestly and are firmly united, He will make us triumph over all our enemies, and give great success to His Gospel through our ministry

" But if ambition, or vain glory, if jealousy, envy or any other wicked passion creeps in and reigns among us, discord will enter also, we shall be divided, and God, jealous of His glory, will deliver us all, one after the other, into the hands of our enemies.

" God will not, however, abandon His Church ; He will choose other pastors after His own heart who will be more humble, more faithful, more charitable, and more generous than we are. These pastors will not be imbued with suspicion, mistrust, and jealousy ; they will love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves.

" In the name of God, my dear brother, let us beware of that warning which God gives to us as he did to the Jews, against letting His vineyard to other husbandmen. In the name of God hearken to the voice of one of your brethren who loves you with a sincere and affectionate heart. I desire neither wealth nor honors of men ; I ask of God only His grace and His love. I have abandoned all, and I am ready to sacrifice all for the glory of God and the edification of the Church. Notwithstanding what certain ignorant or malicious persons may say, I do not wish to form another sect ; on the contrary I would, if the thing were possible, quench with my blood all the schisms and heresies in the world ; I love infinitely more to serve Jesus Christ and His Church than to rule over a hundred peasants, a whole kingdom, or even the whole world, because I know that all the kingdoms of the world are as nothing compared with the Kingdom of Heaven which is to be gained by faithfully serving our Lord.

" Reflect well, my dear brother, on all these truths. Lose no time in making several copies of this letter, if you think proper, for distribution among your colleagues and Elders. Confer with them if you can, concerning the Synod that I propose to you ; I speak to all the Elders and Pastors of

this country in speaking to you. After having prayed to God, select well the time, the place, and the persons for this business, a matter which appears to me very important. I will present in the meantime my prayers to God on your behalf, as being always, my dear brother, with a tender affection;

"Your very humble and obedient servant,

"BENJAMIN."

"I commend myself to the prayers of all the faithful who shall see my letter."

This letter of Du Plan betrayed the anxieties and troubles which racked his spirit and his heart. He had found that his individual ideas on inspiration and his close relations with the Inspired had dissatisfied a few pastors and a certain number of the faithful; they accused him in the Synods and in the Assemblies, and reproached him with violating discipline and encouraging schism. These accusations, which had certainly an appearance of truth, moved the heart of Antoine Court, who took up his pen, and finally decided to discuss thoroughly this question which was on the point of impairing the influence of his friend:

"Monsieur,

"I have just received one of your letters which is without doubt addressed to all the pastors. It has no date. I received another some days ago on the same subject, though you say three months have passed since you wrote it. I did not reply because in the first place it had to be communicated to everyone, and this has not been possible in so short a time, and secondly, because I hoped to see and converse with you on the subject in question; but this was not possible. I was

in Nismes, and addressed myself there to the leaders of the Church; they told me they knew nothing concerning you, that you were very mysterious with them, that you tried to hide yourself from them, and that it was necessary to address themselves to certain prophetesses in order to find out where you were. This I did, but the younger sister whom I addressed very mysteriously concealed from me your abode, and in a grave and serious tone, becoming in a person of her character, said to me: 'I do not know his abode, but if you have anything to convey to him we will convey it.' This reserve appeared to me doubtful, and at the same time I was distressed to see that our brave Barak had sought counsel from masked Deborahs while despising the advice of the Elders of the people. The Synods are not so easily assembled as you appear to imagine; this sort of assembly, and under circumstances so delicate as those in which we are to meet together, may give rise to cares, and perplexities, and many dangers and fears; these public bodies cannot be convoked every day, and cannot even be aroused without trouble; difficult however as it may be to convoke them and to put the machine in motion, we would have resolved to overcome all if we could have persuaded ourselves that the measures we might there adopt would be efficacious; but alas! we have the misfortune of knowing by a fatal experience that we are exposing ourselves for nothing, that all the care and all the trouble we give ourselves are useless, while they who appear the firmest defenders of the rules we establish are the first to violate them. Your conduct, Monsieur and dear brother, is but too just a commentary on this mortifying truth; and what is more grievous still, your example is of no small influence with the naturally capricious and independent persons who have so long troubled the Church and who wish nothing better than to see at their head a person of your rank and genius. Gracious God! what mischief will you not do to those whom you have caused to be born to Jesus Christ, if you do not rectify certain of your sentiments; true religion, which is an enemy of

fictions and fanaticism, will suffer harm if you continue to shake by your example the solid foundations of order, in the marvellous building which has been raised amongst the storms and tempests of persecution ! I am not surprised that the Vessons, the Mazelets and the Boyers and all of a similar character, should rebel against order, shake off the yoke of discipline, and evade the wise rules which you yourself have helped to establish : they were mercenary, ignorant, and proud, full of themselves, and acting only from shameful motives of self interest or vain glory ; but what surprises and afflicts me is that a pious, wise, enlightened, charitable, humble and disinterested man should forget himself and thus err ; perhaps I exaggerate your faults, and my microscope magnifies too much the object of my view. I wish and would to God the thing were so ! But alas ! I greatly fear it will be difficult to prove this to me. My silence, you say, joined to the opposition that certain Elders raised, when against order you wished to establish yourself as preacher in a public assembly, has induced several people to say that a spirit of ambition and jealousy has possessed some of our body, and that in place of desiring the glory of God and the love of the Church they desire their own glory under a fine appearance of piety and zeal which leads astray the ignorant. This appears to me the result of insufficient reflection ! In the first place, I do not see how it can be concluded from my silence that I am ambitious or jealous ; it would be more reasonable to say that I was neither one nor the other, or rather that I was indolent and unfeeling ; but it would be better still to adopt the plan which you desired for yourself, of suspending a judgment until the arguments withheld from me had been put in evidence ; to act thus is discreet ; otherwise we risk making mistakes and being considered rash. Secondly, I do not see what other conclusion can be drawn from the conduct of the Elders, who oppose those who violate our rule of faith, especially one of its articles and the eternal law of good order and wisdom. In a happier age and quieter times it would have been otherwise.

and those men would have been characterised as prudent and wise who wished to prevent disorder and the sad results which such irregularities would necessarily produce. If I am not mistaken it is more to the point to say that when a man of superior genius, and distinguished rank sets himself up as a chief and against our rules convokes assemblies and preaches, the result can only be disastrous. If such is the line of conduct M. Du Plan wishes to pursue, he has all the requisite qualifications and his example will consequently be very pernicious. It is only when we oppose the evasions of wise laws that we act according to order and wisdom.

"You say you do not yield because you are not persuaded by good reasons and by passages drawn from the Holy Scriptures. You recognise in matters of faith and controversy only God and His word, and you do not allow yourself to be dazzled by learning and the eloquence of pastors, nor shaken by the multitude of persons who condemn things in which you have recognised the divine character; these sentiments are noble, generous, and worthy of an athletic Christian, but take care you do not allow yourself to be led away by your own judgment; examine anew, with an unprejudiced spirit, the reasons which have been alleged to you for combating your sentiment concerning the prophets of our day; perhaps what you thought were phantoms will appear to you in this light, real and effective. Do not be too much attached to your own sentiments. it is dangerous, and the danger is greater because one naturally loves the production of one's own mind, whether with or without foundation, in the same manner as a mother loves her children whether they are pretty or ugly. It is not wise to be led by the multitude, but there is imprudence and folly in being unwilling to defer to its advice when that advice is wise and well grounded. We ought not to give way in things we recognise as divine, though they may be condemned; this would be to applaud those who call good, evil: but we ought not to fall into the other extreme and call evil, good. This is what you do in assuming that

they who call themselves inspired of the Holy Spirit are so in truth. You support the system on solid and scriptural grounds and you are not willing to surrender; you appeal against the condemnation of your sentiments. Appeals are legitimate and necessary: the Donatists appealed formerly to the Emperor, and thereupon a Council was assembled at Arles; it was held in the year 314. St. Athanasius, after having been condemned at the council of Tyr, brought his case before Pope Julius who discharged and absolved him, as also the Western bishops. Those who at present appeal under the Constitution Ugenitus, from the Pope to the Council, act wisely. Your case has been tried in a town which is at least to the Protestants what Rome was to the Papists; the judgments there pronounced in matters of faith appear to possess more of orthodoxy and infallibility than those which emanate from the Sovereign Pontiff and the capital of the Papal Empire; yet the authors of the judgments do not consider themselves to be infallible, any more than do you, though their decisions may be of weight and deserve careful consideration. If Councils and Synods, or the learned Academy of Geneva, to which you desire to appeal, do not judge your cause more favorably, where will you go next? Will you have recourse to new Synods and to new theologians? Will you hold to your sentiments? Will you persevere in your system? You will have a right to do so under the supposition that it is most in conformity with the analogy of the faith; and like another Athanasius you alone may be orthodox, while all other Protestants may err. If that should be the case you will be very fortunate, but before congratulating you on a good fortune which we do not yet believe to be proved, permit us to ask you for undoubted and authentic evidence of the truth of your principles. As to ourselves, we continue to say that so long as we do not discover the character of a true prophet in those who wish to pass in the world as such, we shall remain firm in our belief. Among the characteristics which should

distinguish a prophet are holiness of life, generous courage, and veritable prophecies. A prophet should be holy, able to foretell the future and know the secret thoughts of men. His conduct should be very pure and he should possess a generous and magnanimous courage that he may overcome the greatest and most formidable obstacles, while attacking error and vice wheresoever they may be found; such was the courage of the ancient prophets. He should always speak the truth, this being his chief and distinctive character; if he swerves in the least, he is an imposter, a knave, and a man worthy of public execration: he is ungodly and profane, abusing the most holy things. If by this rule we examine the prophets of to-day; how many liars and imposters shall we not find?

"Happy will it be if among the great number of prophets is found some Micah; but alas! a false spirit is dispersed among them; when the false prophets say the Almighty has spoken by them it is a lie, for the Almighty has not done so, but they trust that their words may be fulfilled. Your own personal experience should have undeceived you; the prophecies of the Valadières, as you think, had formerly the semblance of divinity; this was at a time when fortune favored them; to-day when things have changed and they have fallen into disgrace, it is no longer the same; their prophecies have now no divine semblance. Can anything be more pitiable! Poor prophetesses! How unhappy is your condition, since the divinity of your prophecies and your prosperity depend on the caprice of men! I always (this I say in passing) treated with much scorn a Valadière prophetess, formerly famous among the party but who is now driven out, rejected, and railed at: in truth it were better to be your meanest servant than your prophet, as under Herod the Great it was better to be his pig than his son.

"The comparison which you draw between prophets and doctors is not just: the first speak under the operation of the Holy Spirit, the second teach a science they have acquired; the first should be infallible in their doctrine, the second

may err; the first if they mislead the people, lose their good name of prophets and become imposters; of doctors it cannot be said that they willingly mislead the people. You admit however that there are abuses among the pretended prophets of the day: that alone is sufficient to make us reject them. I admire the word *pretended* which you make use of; if they are only *pretended* prophets, they ought not give themselves out as true; and we ought not to receive them as true.

"You say you are not alone in your belief; we know, however, that the greater number is not on your side; but what does that signify? You are the little flock, alone favored of heaven; Ha! may we not lose sight of this Noah's ark, the only safe house in the storm; you understand me without further explanation.

"We do not forget that Vesson had several elders, but it is a new doctrine of theology that those who hold the sentiments of schismatic fanatics are fit to be Elders and can be useful to the Church. It is true that He who formerly opened the eyes of the blind with clay could make profitable use of those who have too long troubled the Church; but as an event of this nature is doubtful and without any probability, its consideration must not enter into our minds.

"It is right for a good pastor sometimes to leave the ninety-nine sheep to seek the hundredth which has wandered; we have done this more than once; but up to the present we have not been able to bring it back to the fold; there are sheep who only assume the skin of that innocent animal, while still retaining the attributes of its enemy; we do not however grow weary in caring for them, happy if by the help we render we may restore them to the fold."

31 August 1723.

Du Plan replied to him immediately:—

"Monsieur, my very dear and honored brother,

"I received your letter dated the 31st of August, on the 2nd of September, about four or five o'clock in the afternoon

by an agent who quitted his business expressly to execute his duty in regard to the interests of the Church. Though at the time I was with a sick person who had need of my help and consolation, though I was late and had four leagues to go, and was in danger of having to sleep outside the town; though I had sent my clothes to a place where I was expected and whither had been sent two horses, one for me and the other for my invalid; and lastly though a pain in my knee, forbade me to fatigue myself, and to trot my horse as I have done, I set out on learning from your letter, that you had important business to communicate to me, and have arrived very tired—with my knee much inflamed—at the place where I hoped to have seen you. While waiting the pleasure of embracing you, I have thought that in order to fulfil my duty and your expectation, it would be convenient to reply to you on some points in your letter.

“In the first place, I do not pretend to date or sign my letters, to put the address of persons, or to signify the places whence they come and whither they go, for reasons which appear to me sound. I know what doing this has cost me and others.

“Secondly, I know it is more than three months since you received my first letter touching the Synod I believe to be necessary in order to bring together the faithful, and this time appears to me to be longer than is necessary for giving notice to our brethren of what I wrote to them: it would not have required more than half the time to inform the whole of Europe. Is this negligence on your part in accordance with good faith? and even if you were unable to communicate with our brethren—a thing difficult to understand—have you done well in attributing the delay to me and in giving me your own, while waiting for the general opinion? Your excuse and that of the Elders does not appear to me to be legitimate, when you affirm that knowledge of my whereabouts was mysteriously withheld. It is true I have had at certain times to take great precautions, but I have been careful that my relations, and above all the

Elders, should have the means of communicating with me by letter or otherwise if they wished; let them then find other pretexts to excuse themselves! my prisons and my gaolers were well known and quite accessible.

"If the subject in question were not so serious and of such great consequence, I could answer your sarcasm; it is better simply to reply that if God had chosen me to be a valiant Barak I should not have left myself to the direction of false Deborahs; if, however, God had selected a true person as His messenger, I should not have despised her; on the contrary, I should have adored, with profound reverence, that invisible and all powerful Hand which sometimes makes use of instruments that to mortal eyes seem vile and feeble, in order to confound the strongest, and those which to the world appear the most brilliant. I say further, if I knew that among the people there was some masked Deborah, as you term it, that is to say, according to the natural meaning of your words, some one inspired of God, who, by a criminal fear like that of Jonah, hid herself, I would find her out and force her to discover and unmask herself in order to ascertain the will of the Almighty, though she might have wished to remain concealed after the example of Jonah or Jeremiah.

"You tell me the Synods are not so easy to convoke as I imagine. I think I ought to know the time required to form a small assembly of Pastors and Elders most capable of speaking on the matter in question and of using efforts to reunite the faithful. Call this assembly, Synod, Council, or Conference as you will, they are synonymous terms, as were Priest, Bishop, and Pastor in the Primitive Church. The business in hand to day appears to me of sufficient importance either to hasten the Synod, or to form a Colloquy, or small Synod, similar to that which was held on the occasion of your marriage, when love had made such lively impressions on your heart, and so blinded your eyes that it concealed the dangers to which you exposed yourself. You are too reasonable not to be convinced that the business before us

concerns the Church more than did your marriage, and that it thus better merits consideration from the Pastors and Elders, in order that a remedy may be provided. I have not the time at present, nor perhaps the capacity, to reply with eloquence to all the flowers of rhetoric that you pompously display in order to express your sorrow, great or small, at the false ideas of yourself and some others touching my supposed wish to form a sect and my infringement of the rules of the Church. Permit me to say to all those who think such things that they are mistaken. I praise your zeal for the glory of God, and for the maintenance of discipline, but on this occasion you have gone a little astray, and in attacking and condemning me you have mistaken the sable for the fox, you have fired at the dog and not at the wolf. Can you conscientiously ignore my services to the Church and the functions I have exercised? Save administering the Sacraments, is there any duty of Pastor or Elder I have not performed with the approbation and consent of all those who have heard me? I have cared for the poor; I have consoled the sick and the afflicted; I have visited the prisoners; I have assisted at the Synods; I have made apologies for our religion; I have presented petitions to the Powers; and further while having been fully recognised by all the Pastors and Students of the Desert for eight or nine years past, I have endeavoured to preach the pure Gospel and to maintain (though not always with success) unity among the brethren whether they be hearers or preachers of the Word. I know not after this what can be the temper of those who set themselves in opposition to the continued exercise of my ministry and the duties of my calling. In truth I know not! If it be asserted that I have not had the usual call to do that which I have done, then I ought to have been opposed during the last fourteen or fifteen years. I can prove to my adversaries that when anyone has an extraordinary vocation, that is to say talents and zeal necessary to edify the Church in troublous times, a formal call is not needed; but that which should completely shut the mouth of every

objector is the verbal and written approbation of the pastors, the applause of the people who hear me, and the fruits reaped by many of the faithful. I ask whether further proof of my legitimate calling was still needed, and whether there was any necessity to employ useless forms and ceremonies for the conferring upon me of that authority which I possessed already, and which I had exercised so long and manifestly before both friends and enemies. I ask whether it has not been openly said that I was the minister of the Protestants; whether I have not sacrificed or placed at hazard everything I hold most precious in this world in order that I might merit the title; and whether I am not ready, through the grace of God, to sacrifice all that remains, if it be necessary for His glory and the edification of the Church? Do not then needlessly distress yourself, or be afraid that I am following in the steps of Vesson, of Mazelet or of Boyer. I have always desired order, peace, and discipline in the Church. You know in part what I have done to put down strife; how when pride or some other wicked passion had cut off Vesson and Mazelet from the Church, I separated myself from them; how, so far from having had relations with these schismatics, I did my utmost to draw away their adherents; and how I spoke and wrote against them in order to destroy the false reputation which they had acquired in the opinion of many honest people who knew them not, while I never intermitted my intercourse with you, or failed to enlogise you to the world in order that our common interests might be maintained. Can anything therefore be more unjust than to suspect me of being schismatic or sectarian.

"It is still possible that some malicious or ignorant persons may accuse me of having had a partiality for the superstitious sect of Montpellier, but God knows that so far from this having been true, I did not fail to censure and reprimand them when I was present about three and a half years since. I never had any sympathy with this residuum or wished to be classed among them; as a proof I may state

that though they besought me earnestly with magnificent promises and terrible threats, and sent expressly to ask me to come among them and establish myself as their chief, they never succeeded in influencing my mind. I had communication with them by letter in which I tried to sap the foundations of their edifice, but God has not seen fit to bless my efforts. It has pleased Him to employ other means than remonstrances to do away with these things. I have submitted to His judgments, and though I sincerely pity those who were involved in this affliction, I can truly say that I was rejoiced when I heard they had been arrested. Thus there is as little reason for you to blame me for the affair of Montpellier, as there is for me to blame you in the matter of Vesson or Mazelet. You have done what you could to bring back these two Schismatics, and have not succeeded; neither have I, but God has delivered His Church from the one as well as the other. He wills that their fall and their example should keep us in humility and charity in order that we should never seek our own glory or self interests, but the glory of God and the edification of the Church.

"I receive with pleasure your exhortation to be not unduly attached to my own sentiments and will endeavour to profit by it; do so yourself for this exhortation concerns every one. You are justified in condemning those who call good, evil, and evil, good; for this reason we should examine all things and retain only that which is good. You cite to me examples which prove that the truth has sometimes been upheld, and sometimes condemned, by Emperors and Popes; for this reason it is necessary to examine the sentiments of Emperors, Popes and Councils, to see how far they agree with the passages of Scripture which establish the dogmas of our faith, after having implored with fervour and humility the light of the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the true meaning of these passages; it is needful, at the risk of our goods, our calling, our reputation, and our life itself, to unite with those who appear the most genuine and the most firm, without allowing ourselves to be beguiled or intimidated by the mul-

titude, by learned reputations, by the eloquence and dignity of the age, by the pompous and magnificent name of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, or by such attractive appellations as the Church of God, or the Spouse of Jesus Christ, which all heretics have usurped. I do not boast of being an Athanasius; if God had chosen me alone to sustain His cause on the subject in question, I could say with truth that God, who does not need the help of man to accomplish His work, had chosen one of the vilest and most unworthy sojourners upon earth, in order that He might set forth the infinite riches of His mercy and the power of His almighty Arm. But thank God, I am not alone in my sentiments. I do not pretend to found a sect: on the contrary, I will do my utmost to be at unity and peace with my brethren; trusting that God will give me grace to succeed in spite of Satan, who constantly endeavours to sow discord in the field of the Lord.

"I have always admitted that there have been impostures and abuses among the pretended Inspired; but I have nevertheless maintained in public, in private, and even in full Synod, that I believe there have been and still are those who have received extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus you are wrong in saying that my own personal experience should have opened my eyes on the matter, and forced me to condemn without distinction all those who pretend to be inspired. There are some who approve, and others who condemn, without either knowledge or examination. As to myself, after having examined the subject as far as possible, I have contemned that party which appeared to me in unison with reason and Scripture, and renounced the other.

"It is right that I should state my reasons for believing that there yet live those who are truly Inspired. I could name to you certain persons who have the qualities which you say in your letter are essential to a true prophet. I have known some who without forethought have described the wonderful ways of God in a style more impressive and in a discourse more flowing than those who have studied much;

their doctrine was orthodox, their lives pure, their courage generous, and their predictions true. These persons have probed my heart, and censured my vices, they have exhorted me to virtue, and have foretold to me many things which I have seen accomplished. God made use of them to withdraw me from my immersion in Popery; they incited me to read the Scriptures and to unite myself with my brethren of the desert; and when I saw that my peril was imminent, because I was marked, they fortified me, and promised on the part of God that my enemies should not put their hands upon me, and that I should be able to pass through fire and water without harm. I have believed, and experienced, thanks to the Lord, the truth of the promises of my Divine Saviour, whose help I have always implored before consulting these persons. If my views be correct, it would be wrong to wish that my faith might be shaken by persuading me that so much good can come from a bad principle. By acquiescing I should render myself guilty of the crime of the Pharisees who attributed to Beelzebub the effects of the Holy Spirit. I assert that no man is justified in wishing to regulate my conduct, as I live by faith and attack neither the Doctrines nor the Divinity of the Holy Scriptures; on the contrary I have always exerted and will continue to exert, if it please God, every effort to publish the Truths of the Gospel both by my words and actions."

At the close of this correspondence and at the instance of Benjamin Du Plan, a Synod was assembled; the party of order not wishing to lose everything as a result of Du Plan's triumph, decreed that all those who had supported Vesson should be obliged in order to re-enter the Church, to make before the Pastors, Elders, and Faithful the following declaration:

"We confess and declare, in the presence of God and of the Church, that we supported Vesson, only at the time

when he preached the word of God, and that we are altogether ignorant of the merits of the schism he raised in the Church. We ask pardon of God for not having given sufficient attention to the subject and prayed to know our duty, and we promise henceforth to remain united with the body of Pastors and Elders who compose the Church, and to oppose with all our strength those who preach without a call, or who refuse to observe the order and ecclesiastical discipline which our fathers have wisely established for the edification of the Church." (September 1723.)

The affair of the Multipliers incited not alone the busy-bodies and the enemies of Benjamin Du Plan, it drew upon him the most violent persecution from the government. The police, having found some of his letters among the papers seized at the house of the widow Verchand, he was dangerously compromised and exposed to the prosecution of the Intendant. For a long time he had been marked, and it was without doubt solely attributable to the high consideration enjoyed by his family, and especially to the intimate friendly relations which subsisted between them and the chief houses of Alais, that he owed his escape from a thousand arrests and from the most rigorous treatment.

But this patience and long-suffering had an end. The position of Benjamin Du Plan was aggravated by the denunciation of the old man, Huc Mazel, who had been arrested at St-Paul-la-Coste and conducted to Montpellier the day after the affair of the Multipliers. In Montpellier the old apostate Camisard confirmed the suspicions of the police, and declared that he knew the Gentleman of Alais personally. He

revealed the important part Du Plan had played among his co-religionists and the influence he had enjoyed in the Synods and Assemblies; he failed not, above all, to rank him with the Inspired, who excited at this time the anger of the authorities. Immediate orders were issued for the arrest of the young nobleman; the Bishop d'Avejan and the Commandant of Alais were obliged to second the designs of the Intendant, and if Du Plan evaded these pursuits it was by a sort of miracle. Several Catholics, ecclesiastics even, warned his relations of the imminent dangers which menaced him. Benjamin Du Plan was at this moment assisting at a Synod near Nismes. He immediately took to flight, and wandered, like the preachers, in the country in disguise and under an assumed name. A price was put upon his head and to facilitate his capture the following description of him was given to numerous agents of the authorities :—

“ Benjamin Du Plan, height about five feet five inches, hair fair and long, (which he often arranges *en queue*), eyes blue, features fair and handsome.”

For two years he evaded the pursuits of the police, and at last when he believed it was no longer possible to conceal himself he decided to cross the frontier. He wished to bid a last farewell to his family when, alas ! he had intelligence of a cruel affliction by which his heart was nearly broken. His mother, on learning the perils which threatened her son, had died of grief, and he feared if he ventured to visit his home that he might have the additional

grief of being reproached by his aged father for her death and of being blamed for his conduct. Nevertheless the nobleman who had sacrificed for God his goods, his repose, and his livelihood, made with Christian submission the sacrifice of his dearest affections. He has told us himself of the extent of these sacrifices, which up to the period of his quitting the kingdom at the age of thirty-seven, he had not hesitated to make for his faith :—

“ With my titles and a considerable fortune, if God had not destined me for the service of His Church I should have been able to ally myself with the illustrious house of La Fare, which abounds with Barons, Marquises, Counts, Captains, Majors, Colonels, Brigadiers, Generals, Marshals of France, Commandants of Provinces and Bishops; my friend, the brother-in-law of the Baron of Alais, having offered me his eldest daughter in marriage. A powerful protection and a fair start in the world would thereby have been assured to me; but like Moses, God has given me grace to prefer the reproaches of Jesus Christ to the riches and honors of this world. I have abandoned for the cause my employment in the army, and have refused the illustrious alliance of which I have just spoken; I have separated from my father who feared being involved in my almost certain ruin; and having thus in a manner abandoned him I have renounced my heritage; I have given up intercourse with the noble and great with whom I was on terms of friendship, to unite with a people persecuted for the gospel, with peasants, artisans, the poor, the despised, the hated, and the persecuted; with prisoners, galley-slaves, and ministers, proscribed and condemned to death: yes, I have preferred to associate with all these persons, though vile and wretched in appearance, rather than with the great, the rich, and the powerful of the earth, because I am persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion, because I know that the world like a dream

disappears, and its glory like a brilliant mirage dissolves into blighted hopes ; and because I am convinced that it is they alone who are minded to serve God, to keep His commandments and to imitate Jesus Christ, who shall live for ever."

The departure of Benjamin Du Plan was so precipitate as not to leave him time to bid adieu to Antoine Court, but he sent him the following letter which revealed the great projects he had formed in his mind in favor of the Church :—

" I much wished to have the pleasure of seeing you before my departure as I had many things of importance to tell you, but since I cannot speak them by word of mouth, I will put down here the most important.

" You cannot be ignorant of the power and malignity of our enemies, and if we outlive them it will be by miracle and by the mercy of God. But now God Himself appears to have turned against us, and not without reason, since the greater number of those who frequent the Assemblies, and who participate in the most sacred rites of our religion, live and pray like heathens ! I will name no one, because I should have to name too many ; neither do I condemn any because, though all are great sinners, I am the chief and the most guilty, having received more light than the greater number of those around me. For this reason I humble myself not only before God, but before men. I acknowledge my unworthiness and corruption. I will not despise or hate anyone ; on the contrary I will give, on every occasion which presents itself, proofs of friendship and esteem to persons, who, though opposed to my views, work for the glory of God and the edification of the Church. This is my duty and also my inclination.

" It is necessary, however, to work together, and as the principal wheel of a machine imparts its motion to the others and the whole is set agoing, so the pastors must stir up the

students, the students the elders, and the elders the people. It is necessary we should vie with each other in holiness. The struggle is commencing and we are surrounded by our enemies ; if we are not alive to our security, and if we do not take the whole armour of faith, we are lost. It is necessary to fast, to pray, to mourn and to be converted ; this is the only way to obtain the victory over Satan, the world and our passions. I exhort and entreat you, my dear brother, in the name of Jesus Christ our common Master and Saviour, to adopt with our brethren, pastors and elders, the most proper and efficacious means to appease the anger of God and to draw forth His justification and love."

This letter ended with some practical advice :—

" Our brother who will deliver my letter, and who you know has long been attached to the service of the Church, will inform you verbally of several things I have been unable and unwilling to put on paper. You know the worth, the piety and the ability of this good servant ; admit him therefore when you discuss your plans. You have *Maitre Baldy* and some others who can compose the secret council. Consult together more frequently than you have been accustomed to do, and vigilantly reunite the chiefs in order to encourage them in the discharge of their duty. You will acquire a glory, much more true and lasting than that of the heroes so famous in history. Your name will be celebrated in the annals of the Church, and you will one day be seated on a throne of glory ! Adieu, my dear brother, I embrace you in spirit, and am with all my heart to you, and to all who love Jesus Christ, the very humble and obedient servant."

(July 1724).

CHAPTER X.

THE DECLARATION OF 1724.

1723-1725.

The flight of Du Plan coincided with a renewed persecution of the Protestants. Up to this time, under the government of the Regent, they had enjoyed comparative repose, and the wearied executioners had time to take breath. The Protestants had profited by the calm to combine afresh; they had ceased to send their children to the Catholic Schools; baptisms and marriages in the Desert had become daily more numerous, and Protestantism like the bird in the fable had sprung again from its ashes.

The Bishop of Alais, Monseigneur D'Avejan, in a long statement to the Court, described with sorrow the progress of the heresy and the failure of measures taken to exterminate it: the assemblies, formerly few and secret, had now become numerous and public; the churches were deserted and parents ceased to send their children to the Catholic Schools, while others dispensed with the baptism of their children by the priests. "So many disorders," added he, "after more than forty years of work and pains on the part of the cleverest men of the last reign and in the midst of a solid peace, justly engender fear of great evils in the future and prove the necessity for adopting decided measures."¹

1. Reflections on the present state of religion in the Cevennes (19 August 1723).

Meanwhile, in 1723 the Regent died and the government of the State passed into the hands of Louis XV. who was yet a minor. The Bishop de Frejus, his tutor, afterwards created Cardinal Fleury, prevailed on the young king to nominate as his first Minister the Duke de Bourbon, a prince of limited intellect and timid disposition. De Frejus, who was a willing tool in the hands of the Jesuits hoped in this way to rule the Kingdom.

The cry of alarm aroused in Alais on the re-commencement of the troubles, resounded in Paris and attracted the greater attention in the Council of the King inasmuch as the ambitious projects of the Councillors were subserved by the persecution of the Protestants. By sacrificing them to the Papacy, Fleury hoped to gain his cardinal's hat. He conspired with another man ambitious like himself, Lavergne de Tressant, formerly almoner of the Regent and afterwards Bishop of Nantes and Secretary of the Council of Conscience.¹

These two men won over the Duke de Bourbon, and in concert with the old Intendant Baviile, then in retirement at Paris, induced him to sign the too celebrated edict of 1724. This edict, which consisted of eighteen articles, imposed the following pains and penalties :—

Men who took part in any worship other than that of the Catholic Church were to be sent to the

1. A private council, composed of the King, his Confessor and a few others, where divers matters concerning the Clergy or the Ecclesiastical State were decided.

galleys for life and have their goods confiscated; women were to be condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

Preachers were to be punished by death.

All who granted them aid or asylum, or failed to denounce them, were to be sent to the galleys for life and their goods to be confiscated.

Parents were ordered to have their children baptised by the parish priest within twenty-four hours of their birth, to send them to school and have them taught the Catholic Catechism up to the age of fourteen, and to divine service on Sundays and holidays up to the age of twenty.

Midwives, physicians, surgeons and apothecaries were ordered to announce all births and cases of serious illness amongst the "new converts" to the priests, and the latter were authorised to visit and exhort the sick without the presence of witnesses. Should any refuse the Catholic sacraments or cause others to refuse them they were to incur the penalties declared against "the relapsed."

No marriages were to be legitimate except those which were celebrated according to the Canons of the Church.

Parents were not to be permitted to educate their children or allow them to marry out of the kingdom. Minors, on the contrary, whose parents were outside the kingdom, could marry without their consent.

Certificates of Catholicism were declared compulsory for all offices, and academical grades, and all admissions into trades or professions.

Lastly, fines and goods confiscated were to be devoted to the support of the reunited subjects who had need of them.

The faithful were cast down on reading this Declaration, which resumèd and aggravated the most cruel edicts of Louis XIV. Some Protestants felt the old Camisard blood boiling in their veins, and thought of taking up arms, but Antoine Court succeeded, though not without trouble, in calming their anger. What was to be done under such circumstances? Address petitions and apologies to the Duke de Bourbon, to Fleury and to Louis XV.? Useless trouble! It was decided to write to the Foreign Powers, not to demand the aid of their arms, but to ask them to interest themselves in the misfortunes of the Protestants and to implore their good offices with the King of France. A Synod was immediately convoked, in October 1724, to decide on the course it was best to pursue in presence of such a Declaration. The Synod examined the grave question whether the Protestants ought to emigrate or remain in France in spite of the persecution. Basnage, Saurin, and all the refugees advised emigration, but Antoine Court withstood them; they deliberated long without arriving at a decision, leaving each one at liberty to fly or to stay, as he pleased. The preachers nevertheless encouraged the faithful to bear patiently the evils that threatened them, and the Synod separated after having ordained a general fast for the purpose

of appeasing the anger of God and re-animating the zeal and piety of the Church.

This Declaration of 1724 was chiefly directed against the preachers. The Intendant published their names and gave their description, and a thousand livres were offered for the apprehension of each.

The head of Cortiez, "the most dangerous of all," was valued at two thousand livres, that of Court for some time previously had been raised in value: formerly not more than one thousand francs had been offered, but the sum appeared so small that it had been raised to a thousand crowns.¹

In spite of all these rigours and persecutions, calm was maintained among the Protestants, and some months after the Declaration of 1724 Cortiez wrote:—"All the places I pass through are quiet; the zeal is considerable and the assemblies are numerous."

These new troubles made a profound impression abroad. Certain pastors of Berlin advised the suspension of the Assemblies so as not to irritate the authorities, while Switzerland displayed marks of sympathy by praying for, and weeping with, the persecuted.

But he who was most moved and most afflicted by this sad news was Benjamin Du Plan. He immediately took his pen and addressed pressing requests to the principal Protestant Courts of Europe,

1. Edward Hughes, already quoted, Vol. I, page 245.

to the King of England, to the King of Prussia and to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

. The following is the letter to the King of England:—

“ Sire,

“ Your Majesty is without doubt aware that recently there has been published in France a Declaration which renews and aggravates all the evils that Louis XIV. formerly inflicted on the Protestants of his kingdom.

“ Though for certain reasons it has not yet been put rigorously into execution, we cannot flatter ourselves that we shall long be preserved from the furious storms which threaten us. This is why, Sire, we have recourse to your Majesty very humbly to supplicate the employment of your good offices on behalf of a great number of the faithful whose only crime on this occasion consists in wishing to serve God according to His word. If the throne of our King had not become inaccessible to us by the misrepresentations of our enemies as to our religion and loyalty; if France and England had not been allied; if the glorious title of Defender of the Faith could have weakened the friendship entertained for each other by the august personages who bear it, we should not have taken the liberty of supplicating your Majesty to intercede for us, fearing your refusal and the displeasure of the King, our ruler.

“ But since, thank Heaven, everything concurs to render your Majesty's favour probable and your Majesty's intercession salutary, we flatter ourselves, Sire, that you will be touched by our sad state and that you will employ all the means which your charity and wisdom may suggest to you on behalf of a great number of Christian Huguenots whom the blind and cruel zeal of Popery is ready to immolate as its victims.

“ We hope, Sire, that the Lord will bless your righteous designs, and that he will render efficacious your charitable solicitude; while on our side, penetrated with a lively

knowledge of your goodness, we will never cease to offer our prayers on behalf of your Majesty and all the Royal family.

"All the Protestants of Europe have good reason to praise God that He has raised up on behalf of His Church a wise and powerful protector in the person of George, a ruler who may be classed with David, Solomon, Constantine, William, and other great princes who have made themselves illustrious by their wisdom, piety, and valour. God grant, Sire, that the unjust projects of your enemies may be turned to their confusion and shame. God grant that the throne of Great Britain may be established in your august family by justice and mercy until the end of time.

"These wishes, Sire, which I echo, are those of all the Protestants of the world, and are especially those of the churches of Languedoc, which I have the happiness to serve and in whose name I take the liberty of presenting, by the hands of the illustrious Archbishop of Canterbury, this very humble petition. These are, above all, the very ardent desires of him who is with a very profound respect, Sire, your Majesty's &c." (1724).

The following is the request which Du Plan addressed to the King of Prussia :—

"Sire,

"Your Majesty is without doubt aware that recently there has been published in France a Declaration which renews and aggravates all the evils that Louis XIV. formerly inflicted on the Protestants of his kingdom.

"The important position which your Majesty occupies, the heroic virtues which display themselves in your person, the profession which you make of true Christianity, the strong proofs of sympathy that you have evinced, and still evince, in the Huguenot cause, and the example of your ancestors of glorious memory afford bright hopes, Sire, that you will listen favourably to the complaints and groans of a great number of good men, who have not only been deprived for

a long time of public worship, and of the true religion, but have been compelled by the most unlawful and severe measures to practise an idolatrous and superstitious worship.

"Though we have not sufficient influence to elicit the compassion of our King, His Majesty cannot complain of our loyalty. We know that his youth, his piety, and his justice have been imposed upon, but we no longer complain against nobles, magistrates and officers of the army; on the contrary we trust to their justice and compassion; it is only against the Papacy and certain persons sold to the Court of Rome that we implore, Sire, your royal and powerful protection.

"You know, Great King, what you owe to God and what you are able to do on behalf of the Churches which are under the Cross. We therefore content ourselves with showing you our miseries. All the Protestant Powers will consider it a duty and a pleasure to co-operate with Your Majesty in this good work.

"God is not pleased that so many powerful and illustrious Christian princes should display so little zeal to sustain the truth, while a small number of ambitious, avaricious and passionate prelates, priests and monks, shew so much ardour for the triumph of superstition.

"We are persuaded, Sire, that Your Majesty, penetrated with love for God and charity for the Church, and aspiring to an immortal glory on earth and an infinite happiness in heaven; we are persuaded, I say, that you will cast your eyes on our sad state, and that you will employ the most efficacious and at the same time the most just and peaceable means possible to arrest the fatal effects of the persecution. Meanwhile, Sire, we will not cease to offer up the most ardent prayers on behalf of your Majesty and the Royal family. May God bless all your righteous designs, Great Prince, and spread the terror of your arms among all your enemies; may God preserve you to be long the joy of your people and the protector of the Church, and, finally may He

after you have completed your days of glory upon earth, crown you with an immortal happiness in heaven ! ”

At the same time that Benjamin Du Plan sent his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he also wrote to Saurin, a pastor in London, asking him to refresh the worthy Prelate's memory, and for this purpose to obtain an interview with him.

Saurin replied :—

“ Monsieur,—It is full time that I should reply to the letter you have done me the honour to write, and that I should render you an account of the commission you have given me. Nothing is more worthy of you than the sympathy you have displayed for the sufferings of the Church, and it is not possible sufficiently to praise your zeal. I only ask you to believe that our refugees in Holland and England have equally at heart all the interests of their persecuted brethren. As they are on the spot, they have contrived on every occasion which presented itself to solicit in favour of the Churches the interest of the Powers under whose control they live, and they will not cease to work with activity and zeal so long as they see the least hope of success. Unfortunately the present state of affairs does not seem very favourable, and to judge from incidental circumstances we have little reason to hope that God has yet heard their petitions.

“ Your letter, Monsieur, as you wished, has been communicated to my Lord Archbishop, and he has himself desired that you should be informed of what he has done. As soon as he received the petition you sent to him for presentation to the King, he had the goodness to deliver it into the hands of my Lord Townsend, one of our Secretaries of State, and to solicit his good offices. This is all he could do at the time, but since the commencement of the year he has taken a more decided course. Supported by several Bishops, he has represented to the King the state of

the Protestant Churches beyond the sea, and fervently implored the King's protection. The King listened with much attention and replied to him with his usual benevolence. In regard to the affairs of France, he said he could not assume to act openly, but he would do all in his power for the Protestants as opportunity might serve. May God grant that opportunities soon present themselves; meanwhile may He inspire our brethren under the Cross with courage to quit the places where their faith is so much tried, and instill into the minds of all, the piety and fervour that are necessary to avert His anger and to hasten the return of His compassion—thus may everyone follow your example.

"I have the honor to be with every possible consideration, Monsieur, &c., &c."

It would be impossible to describe the anxiety of Benjamin Du Plan after the publication of this Declaration. He was without news from his friends, intercourse having become much more difficult and correspondence all but impossible. In writing, it was necessary to practise a ruse to deceive the enemy always vigilantly on the watch. A merchant who traded between Switzerland and France consented at his risk and peril to conceal a few books amongst his merchandize or to deliver a letter secretly. In order to avoid seizure the letters had to be written with excessive prudence, without date and without signature, or at most with the initials of the writer. As nothing in the letter must betray him who received it, the names of places and persons were either suppressed or abridged. As to the address of the letter or packet it was generally so contrived as not to arouse suspicions. Antoine Court was often designated by the

name of his mother, or by an assumed name with the qualification of merchant. Sometimes months elapsed before the letters were delivered; it was thus that Du Plan learned for the first time in the month of April the imminent danger which had befallen his friend in the first days of the year 1725. Antoine Court had assembled twenty persons in the house of a man named Jalabert of Alais, when the mounted police invested the house and made his hearers prisoners; by a special Providence the preacher alone escaped, he being more active and more accustomed to surprises and concealment than the others. Four of the captives, Carrière, Dussein, Gervais and Ponge, were condemned to the galleys.¹

At the news of this marvellous deliverance, Benjamin Du Plan wrote to his friend to congratulate him :—

“ Praised be the Eternal our God ! Praised be His Holy Name from age to age ; His mercy extends from generation to generation. He watches over His Church, He cares for His children. He permits the wicked to execute their evil designs to a certain point only, in order to try His servants.

“ My dear brother, and friend,

“ We ought never to forget the providential miracle which has been wrought on your behalf. I have blessed and will bless the Lord with all my soul, during the remainder of my life. The more I reflect upon this event, the more I recognise in it the Hand of God which has preserved you in the midst of the tempest, sword, fire, and wild beasts. I

1. They afterwards appealed to the parliament of Toulouse and were acquitted.

realise, my dear friend, all your troubles and conflicts. I see you surprised by your enemies in a house, not knowing the country, and escaping in the darkness of the night upon roofs slippery with snow and rain ; I see you repulsed from the first refuge which you seek in your extremity ; I see you all alone, narrowly escaping from two soldiers, who are well pleased at driving you back into your hiding-place as into a cage of which they have only to shut the door ; I see you, with failing strength, climbing high walls ; I see you hemmed in by enemies on all sides, and betrayed by the glare of the flambeaux which surround the island.¹ I see you, finally, collecting the wood for your coffin, digging your tomb in a dunghill, and God Himself concealing you in order that the wicked may not touch His anointed. Who will not admire, after all this, the Providence of God who despises His adversaries, who exposes their evil designs, and who turns to naught their night watchings, their works, their cunning and their strength ? Let us complete, my dear friend, the history of this marvellous deliverance. I see you fasting and lying in an uneasy position in your tomb, covered with planks, dung and snow, and attacked by insects ; then I hear you, like Jonah, crying from the profound depths to the high heavens during twenty or twenty-one hours. God hears you. God answers you. He pours into your soul the patience and confidence necessary for your support under these rude trials, and when the time fixed for your stay in the tomb has expired, I hear a still, small voice which says to you : Lazarus, come forth ! Peter, arise ! Throw off thy grave clothes, strengthen thyself, march and fear nothing ! I will close the eyes of thine enemies and conduct thee safely among thy brethren ! Can I doubt that God has spoken to you, my dear friend, though he has not pronounced the words audibly ? No ; your supplications and inward cries reached Him through the planks, the dung, the snow, the air, and the heavens,

1. *Island* here signifies an isolated block of buildings.

where, penetrating in to His presence, they moved the bowels of His mercy in your favour; in favour of your Rachel and her child; in favour of all those who love you; in favour of the Church which rejoices and will yet rejoice until the end of time at your marvellous deliverance. God then, my dear friend, answers you secret cries, by giving you strength, courage, and prudence to pass without danger through the midst of your enemies, and by sending you afterwards a guide to conduct you in safety to the house of your friends, there quietly to recruit your strength exhausted by long fastings, by night watchings, by fatigues, and by terrible struggles under which nature must infallibly have succumbed, had it not been for the special favour of God. Who will not admire the wonders of Providence as displayed in this extraordinary event? I cannot cease to praise the Lord for your deliverance. I am penetrated with lively gratitude for His great mercy; my soul blesses the Eternal and forgets not His benefits. It is not by human nature alone, by some slight friendship, by some worldly interest, or by some human relationship, that I find myself united with you, my dear friend; it is by the grace and by the love of God, an indissoluble tie, much closer and more intimate than those I have enumerated. God, in preserving you, preserves to me, not a brother or a friend simply, but a tender brother and a faithful friend who has devoted his life to the glory of God and the edification of the Church. What cause for thankfulness and praise to my God! Yea, O God, I will bless Thee throughout my whole life, for Thou hast had compassion on my friend, on his wife, on his child, on me and on all Thy Church. O God, never permit us to render ourselves unworthy of Thy favour and protection, come to our help and give us grace that we may be diligent in the discharge of all our duties. By fulfilling our duties, my dear friend, as far as human infirmity will permit, we may reasonably hope to have God for our protector, and if God is our protector we ought to be assured that we shall sooner or later obtain the victory over all our enemies, visible and invisible.

"I am desired by several ministers and persons of distinction and merit to congratulate you on your deliverance, and to assure our Churches of the interest they take in all that concerns our welfare.

"I am delighted that Isabeau¹ in her death has borne witness as a good Christian. God will strengthen the other prisoners; do not forget them. God will sit in judgment with the Council that shall try our brethren, and give them wisdom and firmness meet for the occasion. My special remembrances to the brave Baldy. M^{re} Cortiez² and her daughter thank you for your kind regards. They are at present well, thank God, and salute you; they praise God for your preservation. M. Ginoux à Genè.; M^{re} de Sal.; M^{re} de G...; M. T...; M. L...; M. Vi...; M. Lavalette were all much rejoiced when they heard of your escape, and specially salute you. M. de Marley and his family are delighted. Finally, all the worthy people who know you by sight and reputation send good wishes. God will fulfill all these desires if we set ourselves to please Him. O God render us worthy of Thy love and that will suffice us! Read my letter again in order that you may better attend to what I have said. I often read your letters. It is necessary to reflect on everything and to take wise measures in order to arrive at wise results. Your last letter is in good style. Embrace my brethren on my behalf and assure them of my affection. Your prose is very good, but your poetry is worth nothing. Therefore abandon poetry, although you may have a lively imagination and a fertile mind. The verdict of all connoisseurs is, that there is more pleasure derived from the perusal of a subject if its sense and spirit be good." (April 1725.)

1. A prisoner for the cause of religion.

2. This was Madame Cortiez. The title of Mademoiselle was given to married women who were not noble, or being noble were not titled.

CHAPTER XI.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN IS NOMINATED AS DEPUTY
GENERAL OF THE SYNODS TO THE
PROTESTANT POWERS.

The 1st of May 1725.

Notwithstanding the violence of the persecution, Antoine Court did not forget the important statement sent to him by his friend before taking flight for Geneva. No moment could be more opportune for pleading the cause of the Churches under the Cross. He convoked, on the 1st of May 1725, a Synod at which he expounded Du Plan's proposition. This proposition was greeted with the applause of the Assembly. Some scruples were raised, it is true, as to Du Plan himself. His merits and capacity could not be misunderstood, but it was regretted that he had compromised his authority by his relations with the Inspired. Antoine Court having re-assured the doubting, and answered for his friend, the Gentleman of Alais was elected unanimously. The following letter from Antoine Court to Du Plan gives us a description of this important sitting :—

“ Monsieur, and very dear friend,

“ I am glad my last letter has given you so much pleasure; you say that M. Cortiez and I ought to confer together as to the appointment of the Synods and the subjects which should be there discussed; this is what we did a few days after I sent you my letter; a Synod was held on the first of

the present month. Three deputies from Churches of the Cevennes and two from each Church of Lower Languedoc were present. After having observed the usual formalities, and invoked the name of God, I opened the meeting by describing the sad state of our Churches, what God had already accomplished in their favour, and the means He would adopt to preserve them and render their condition more enduring. I then gave a syllabus of the subjects on which the Assembly should deliberate.

"One of these subjects was the proposed deputation of certain of our number to the Protestant Powers, as much to implore their powerful protection as to solicit them to use their influence and authority, on behalf of our Churches, with the Monarch in whose Empire and under whose sway we live; and not only to represent to him that his own judgment as well as that of his great-grandfather had been imposed upon in all the edicts, declarations and decrees which have been promulgated against our beloved Churches, and our Holy Reformation, but to obtain from his goodness the revocation of these same edicts, decrees, and declarations, all of which are opposed to our ancient privileges, and to the sweet and precious liberty of serving God in his Majesty's realm, according to the dictates of our consciences. I pressed the necessity of the deputation, and it was acknowledged and accorded. The only question to be considered was whether one person or several should be selected for this important commission, and on whom the choice should fall. The deputies from the Cevennes advised sending three, or at least two, according to the instructions given to them at certain colloquies held to discuss the subject. I represented that one ought to suffice, especially as the present state of the Churches would not permit of the absence of two pastors; and when it was agreed to send one only, I proposed to the Assembly that it could not do better than address itself to M. Du Plan who had already discharged many important commissions and evinced on all occasions an ardent and sincere zeal for the welfare of our Churches. As evidence,

I referred to the petitions he had been good enough to write in the name of the Churches, since his sojourn at Geneva, to the King of Great Britain, the King of Prussia, and my Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and in case they were ignorant of these facts I stated, that I had the permission of M. Du Plan himself to read aloud the petitions and a letter he had written to the Assembly to prove to them his affection and zeal. During the reading, there reigned a profound silence. It was a certain augury of approval and was only at last broken by one common exclamation, 'We give him our suffrage.' The act of attestation with full powers and recommendations was then prepared. This important document which I enclose herewith is not sent without fervent wishes for the happy issue of your mission and for the preservation of your beloved self." (May 1725.)

After having selected a deputy, the Synod occupied itself with his duties. Court declared that these should be to supplicate the protection of the Powers on behalf of the Churches, and to solicit them to intercede with Louis XV. in order to obtain a revocation of the Edicts.

The Synod finally fixed the remuneration of the deputy at fifty pistoles.¹ This sum had to suffice for his correspondence, his journeys and all the expenses he would have to incur. By any other man this pittance had been scorned, but Du Plan, being rich and his relations providing for his ordinary expenditure, he demanded no remuneration, or if he accepted any it was that he might not be reduced to extremity and thereby hampered in his duties.

1. Twenty pounds sterling.

Cortiez, who was secretary of the Synod, hastened to send to Du Plan his officially attested credentials to the foreign courts as Deputy General of the Synods of the Reformed Churches of France. This document was thus worded :—

“ We Pastors, Students and Elders of the Reformed Churches of Lower Languedoc, of the Cevennes, and of Vivarais, assembled in Synod in the Desert, after having implored the Divine compassion in our sufferings, have judged it fitting to depute one of our number to the Protestant States to recommend our cause to their powerful and gracious intercession, as we consider that we should neglect no legitimate means to secure ourselves from the fury of our enemies and the persecution under which we have so long groaned.

“ We have had less difficulty in deciding on this measure in that we know that God often makes use of the great of the earth to accomplish great things on behalf of His Church, and because we learn with singular satisfaction that the august princes of our communion, while taking deeply to heart the cause of God, interest themselves keenly in the misfortunes of those who suffer for the truth ; we are thus led to hope that they will accord a favorable audience to him whom we have nominated and whom we charge with our interests.

“ Stimulated by the aforesaid considerations, we have, by unanimous consent, chosen and admitted, and do choose, and admit, for our Deputy to the Protestant Powers, le Sieur Benjamin Du Plan, a man who, to his own honor and our edification, has given evidences of his zeal for God, and his love for our Churches, on several very important and delicate occasions.

“ We supplicate very humbly all Kings, Princes, Magistrates, Consistories, Pastors and Churches of our religion, to recognise as our Deputy the said Sieur Benjamin Du Plan, bearer of these presents, and to place reliance on all that he

may testify on our behalf and by our orders, he being well informed and well advised of our condition and our necessities.

"We recommend both him and ourselves to their gracious benevolence and compassionate sympathy, while we will never cease to present to heaven our earnest prayers on their behalf, asking God with all our heart to animate them with His good spirit, crown with success their just projects, and shower on their august, venerable, and pious persons His most excellent and abundant blessings.

"Given in the Desert, in France, in Lower Languedoc, and at our Synodal Assembly, the 1st of May, 1725. In confirmation of which some of us, as representing all our body have hereunto set our names.

"Signed : A. COURT, Pastor Moderator ;
CORTIEZ, Pastor ;
J. CHAPEL, Student ;
BONBONNOUX, Pastor ;
BETRINE, Student ;
BOYER, Student ;
COMBES, Student ;
JAUBERT, Student.¹"

Benjamin Du Plan cordially thanked Antoine Court and the Synod for this proof of confidence. Not, however, without sorrow did he learn that his name had provoked some opposition. As to the question of the expenses of the Delegation, he repeated to his friend what he had written to him several times.

"To meet the expenses, so much dreaded, a small fund might be raised. I would sacrifice all that I possess in the world, sooner than be chargeable to the Church. It is from God alone and not from men that I look for my reward."
(7th of February 1725.)

1. Extract from an original document.

A month later he wrote :—

“ I am determined not to accept anything of the Churches except in the last extremity, and in the event of Providence failing to furnish me with other means wherewith to prosecute my journey. I know the poverty of the faithful as well as the avarice of those who could, if they wished, benefit us without inconvenience to themselves.”

(2nd of March 1725.)

The following is the letter which the new Deputy wrote to the Synod :—

“ Messieurs, my very dear and honoured brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ The grace and peace of God be with you.

“ I have learned with much joy that God continues to give you evidences of His protection and love, and you must have learned with like joy how He has blessed the means I have employed on your behalf ; but as we should not rest on the peaceful road, and as we are surrounded by numerous enemies, both within and without, it is prudent that we should adopt new measures to evade the snares of our enemies and to glorify God in a manner more perfect than we have hitherto done. I am as conscious as anyone of our weaknesses and that our ruin would be consummated if God were only to abandon us to ourselves or give the bridle to our enemies. But I am also conscious that if God is for us and if He takes our cause in hand, we shall be victorious over flesh and hell. All then that we have to do is to renew our alliance with God ; this is easy of accomplishment if we humble ourselves before Him with reverence, redouble the ardour of our prayers for His succour, obey what He commands, and avoid what He forbids. These things we must do if we be true to our calling and wish to be happy. We have experienced the divine protection during several years, and it is in the power of God to give us still stronger proofs of His love. He can change the hearts of our adversaries and turn

towards us the favor of our King as He turned the favor of King Cyrus toward the people of Israel when captive in Babylon.

"If we are true to ourselves we shall not fail to perceive that our unfaithfulness, thoughtlessness and love of the world are so great, that it is alone through the infinite mercy of God we have our being. It is of the utmost importance we should overcome the jealousy and divisions that too much abound amongst us. I shall neglect nothing which can contribute to the removal of all pretexts for complaint against me personally. I am well aware that the spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of charity, mutual help and humility. St. Paul, to gain disciples for his Divine Master, became all things to all men; Jesus Christ Himself associated with the Publicans and Pharisees, desiring to do good unto all men, and not wishing that any should perish. It appertains only to Anti-Christ and his agents to use violence, but we, my very dear and well beloved brethren, ought to be animated with the same Spirit as our Divine Saviour. It is by these means that we shall overcome all our enemies, visible and invisible. Let us distrust the bitterness which hides itself under a pretext of zeal for the glory of God. It costs nothing to a corrupt nature to denounce or blacken the reputation of a neighbour or persecutor; but it costs much to mortify one's passions and correct one's vices. For this reason we ought to work together, for it is certain that our good examples will produce more fruit both among our friends and foes, than the most beautiful and touching preachings in the world.

"I have said enough at present both for you and for myself, and I will refer you once more to God and to His Holy Word which should be the constant rule of our faith and our morals; it should also be our daily bread and the delight of our souls; the more we meditate upon it and practise it, the more will God give us the witness of His love; we shall feel that God is truly our Father, Jesus Christ our Saviour and Elder Brother, and heaven our heritage.

These blessings I wish for you all with my whole heart, while recommending myself to your friendship and your prayers I renew my assurance of love, and devotion to your service."

CHAPTER XII.

ONE YEAR'S RESIDENCE OF DU PLAN AT GENEVA.

1724—1725.

Since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Geneva had become the refuge of fugitive Protestants, and especially of the Protestants of the South; its proximity to France, the remembrance of Calvin, and a community of religion, had all tended to promote brotherly love between the Protestants of the two countries, before even the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It was France that had given to Geneva her great political and religious Reformer, and in the day of trouble Geneva did not forget to acknowledge the gift; she opened her doors to the exiles and fugitives with the most generous hospitality.

She did so nevertheless with prudence. Louis XIV., and subsequently the Duke of Orleans, saw with displeasure crowds of refugees hurrying abroad, and experience having proved that the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven from France her most industrious subjects and carried away the fruitful germs of a material and moral prosperity, not alone did the Court forbid the passage of the frontiers, it imposed upon its neighbours a greater

caution in the reception of the runaways. Louis XIV. had uttered special menaces against the Swiss, and in 1723 they were repeated by the Regent, who also directed the French Chargé d'Affaires to remonstrate with the Protestant Church of Geneva. Professor Pictet was accused of corresponding with the Huguenots, of giving them instruction and counsel, and, among other things, of leading them to believe that they were free to choose their own pastors, to preach, and to administer the sacraments; these things being contrary to the orders of the King, Pictet was called before the Syndic where he succeeded in justifying his conduct.

Prudence therefore was necessary, but this prudence did not stifle the generous sentiments of the heart. From Geneva had been sent the packets of Bibles and religious books to replace those which had been torn and burnt by the persecutors, and from Geneva above all had proceeded the money which was mysteriously distributed to the prisoners and galley slaves for the alleviation of their tortures.

Benjamin Du Plan had personal motives for preferring Geneva to any other place of exile. Antoine Court had frequently told him about the eminent men who composed the pastoral body of that Church, such as Pictet, Vial and Maurice Turretin; and it was with no little pleasure that Du Plan now made their acquaintance. He was not an entire stranger to them, Court, during his stay in Geneva in 1720, having often referred to the Gentleman of Alais, his friend and indefatigable

companion, and it was this gentleman who now came to partake of their hospitality and to seek among them a little calm and repose after fourteen years of incessant struggles. Du Plan's reception was warm and hearty; he happily found himself in the midst of a polished, learned, and distinguished society, in keeping with his rank, family and education. He had been long severed from such society, preferring, to social enjoyment, an agitated and troubled life in woods and caverns, with peasants and rude mountaineers for his companions; but God had reserved sweet solace at Geneva for the Nobleman who had so readily sacrificed his ease for the love of Christ and the good of the Church.

He had scarcely arrived in the city when he was surrounded and interrogated as to the state of his persecuted brethren. Particulars were demanded of him respecting the Assemblies in the Desert, Assemblies which were considered rash and imprudent in view of the severity of the Edicts. Du Plan pleaded their necessity as Antoine Court had done before. The excellent and learned Pictet questioned the Nobleman concerning the Inspired who had so greatly endangered the unity of the Church and whose late chiefs had been hanged at Montpellier; perhaps he was not ignorant that the young fugitive was suspected of sympathising with them. But when he heard Benjamin Du Plan vehemently denounce the conduct of Vesson, Huc and Verschand, and pronounce as an absolute duty

obedience and respect to the constituted body of the Church, his prejudices gave way, his heart expanded, and he offered Du Plan the hand of brotherly love and friendship.

A few days after his arrival in Geneva, Du Plan received from Antoine Court an affectionate letter, in which his old friend expressed his sorrow at their disagreement; he gave him at the same time certain practical counsels concerning the Inspired refugees at Geneva, hoping thereby to save him from annoyance and distress such as he had endured in France. The Gentleman of Alais did not fail to ponder over the wise counsels of his friend.

“Monsieur and dear friend,

“It was with true joy I learned that you had arrived safely at your destination, but I was really sorry not to have seen you before you took to flight. I missed you only by two days, and if I had received the letter which was a reply to the one I had the honour to write to you after my return from the Vivarais, I should have been in time. It was, however, otherwise ordered; thus then we are far removed from each other; we no longer make journeys together and battle shoulder to shoulder under the standard of our common Master. This afflicts me! Still if we are separated in body let us be more intimately united than ever in the spirit to fight, and let us work with renewed zeal in the vineyard of our Lord. If you can no longer do so by exhortation address those who have the power of doing good by your pen, your fervent prayers and your petitions; having received talents of a superior order, you must not let them rust; it is more essential than ever to write well and forcibly; you are able to do both—fail not in the task, your own glory will be great. Endeavour to observe as far as possible a certain order in the arrangement of your sentiments and ideas. I

approved of the petitions you addressed to the Powers. There are some good points in them, but it cannot be denied that there is a certain confusion. I hope they may be efficacious.

"Allow me to exhort you to conceal the sentiments you hold on revelation as far as your conscience will permit; a too open intercourse with persons who hold your views can but produce bad effects. Have the goodness to watch and be careful.

"Rome is quietly and cautiously operating against those whom she regards as heretics, but as this attitude is an unnatural and constrained one, she will soon abandon it and persecute with fire and blood. After the registration in the Supreme Courts of the Province, of the Declaration which so much roused your resentment on the one hand, and your pity on the other, she appeared to be quieted; but on the first of this month, when we were least expecting it, a crier proclaimed the Declaration with the sound of a trumpet in the public places of the town of Nismes.

"I am leaving to assist at an assembly of our companions of the mountains and will acquaint you with the result as far as it may merit your attention.

"I long to hear your good news; do not delay sending them. Describe to me exactly your present state as a good friend can and should; the manner in which you have been received, and those with whom you are in relationship; whether you intend to make a long stay at your first stopping-place, and what is said of our affairs. It is asking a great deal of you, but not too much, since I entertain sincere and ardent wishes for your prosperity, and since I have the honour to be, with the most tender and affectionate sentiments, &c."

We have already said that on quitting Nismes Benjamin Du Plan had placed in the hands of Antoine Court a statement regarding a grave question which occupied his mind. In that state-

ment he had besought his friend to convoke an early Synod and to demand from it the appointment of a deputy to the great Protestant Powers to plead the cause of the Churches, a duty which he himself offered to fulfil. The idea was excellent. The Powers had effectually intervened on several occasions and what would they not do when a man delegated by the Churches should come to solicit them? Was any man apparently better qualified than the Nobleman of Alais to undertake this mission? His name, his rank, his education and his general information were all of a character to facilitate his access to great personages and to Courts. In spontaneously offering his services to his brethren, Benjamin Du Plan did himself no more than justice.

"It requires a certain boldness, he wrote later, not possessed by everyone, to speak and to write to Nobles, Princes and Kings. Temperament, education, a little intercourse with the nobility, some years service in the army, a degree of faith in certain persons whom I believed to be inspired and who assured me of the protection of God, but above all the grace of our Lord, which I implored before undertaking anything, have produced in me an extraordinary boldness almost resembling rashness."

While waiting for the decision of the Synod, which he took for granted would not be unfavourable, Du Plan set himself to work. He wrote to the King of Prussia through the mediation of a pious and distinguished lady, and addressed to M. Lenfant, a celebrated minister and chaplain to the King, a statement of the condition of the Reformed Church of France; he wrote to M. Saurin in Holland and

presented through a confidential agent a petition to their Exalted Majesties of the Hague; he had already written to the King of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury and had found them easy of access through persons of distinction and piety who volunteered to support his solicitations; finally he proposed to establish relations with Switzerland for the benefit of the Churches or of the faithful, obliged like himself to seek refuge there. These journeys and this correspondence necessarily involved great outlay, but that was no hindrance to the zeal of the pious gentleman; he defrayed all his own expenses and decided to sacrifice his whole fortune if it were necessary. In the event of his means becoming exhausted, he hoped that the Churches out of gratitude would supplement them by a just recompense.

The letter in which he communicated all these projects to Antoine Court concluded with the following beautiful words :—

“ I offer many prayers on behalf of your companions in service. May God by His grace preserve and bless them in all their labours. Can you suppose, my dear friend, that my prayers are less fervent and sincere for you than for your companions? On the contrary you ought to feel persuaded that, since Providence has drawn us together like it did David and Jonathan, I interest myself specially in all that concerns you. I will be straight forward then; I will tell you what I think of your conduct, and will ask you to do the same by me. I believe that Providence has endowed us in a greater measure than others with those talents which attract men's attention; never let us turn them to our own glory, but

only to the glory of God and the edification of the Church! If we surpass our companions in eloquence, brilliancy, intelligence or any other capacity, let us aim at surpassing them also in humility, modesty, integrity, moderation, gentleness, temperance, patience, zeal and charity. If the part we play is inexpressibly glorious, it is not less dangerous and delicate. Not only are the Churches of Languedoc eye-witnesses of our conduct, but the Academy of Geneva also, as well as numerous pious and distinguished persons in many towns and provinces. We may perhaps be on the point of having the eyes of all Europe upon us. But even if the eye of God alone was watching us, that in itself should be sufficient to make us both godly and true. Therefore, my dear brother and friend, let us do our utmost to please God; always walking as if under His eye and in His presence, and we shall thus assuredly overcome all our earthly adversaries and one day triumph in heaven. O God, abandon us not to our frailty! Arm of the Eternal, sustain and finish in us by Thy grace the work Thou hast commenced for Thy glory and the edification of Thy Church!

"I pray you to salute affectionately your dear Rachel. May God preserve her as well as her dear husband from the hand of every Esau. I have received in this town infinitely more respect than I deserve. Most of the pastors, besides a great number of persons of merit of all classes, take a deep interest in all that concerns us. I am, with sincere esteem, Monsieur and dear friend, your very humble and obedient servant."

(22nd of October, 1724).

Benjamin Du Plan had scarcely been a year in Geneva when he received his nomination as deputy. He had profitably employed this time in resting from his severe fatigues and repairing his shattered health. Nevertheless the repose was not without benefit to the Church whose vicissitudes he followed

with interest from afar. A regular and detailed correspondence with Antoine Court kept him informed of the principal events and enabled him in imagination to live in the sphere of his former labours. He took every opportunity of communicating the letters of his friend to the learned brethren of Geneva in order to gather their impressions, which with a fraternal liberty he imparted to his ancient colleague.

"I have shown your letter to several persons of piety, merit and capacity, who have found it very good. They consider that you describe things well. Endeavour, my dear friend, to perfect yourself more and more in your style, as well as in your sentiments. With regard to your figurative and high-flown language, you will do well to abstain from it altogether, because it is not customary in this country and still less in the North where the people are phlegmatic. We must content ourselves by expressing our thoughts solidly, clearly, and in order."

(October 1724).

"When you write do not use grand words or figures without an absolute necessity, but write as simply and as naturally as possible; make a diary of your journeys and progress, as M. Cortiez does; this affords great pleasure."

(March 1726).

"I have communicated your letter to several persons of distinction, piety and merit, who have found in it much thought and good sense. It is certain that if you be on your guard against bombast, that is to say against a pompous and magnificent phraseology which is not at all customary, you will acquire the art of pleasing and convincing, and that is all we ought to aim at in speaking or writing. An orator ought to arrange his words and ideas as a painter arranges his colours. It is not the brightest colours only that are always most suitable. It is necessary to know how to

temper, soften, and manage even the shades, to represent naturally the things which we paint. Before speaking or writing, a plan must be formed of what we wish to represent, We must acquire a just idea of each thing, and place each thing in position. We must know the whole force and precise signification of each term and each figure. A man in speaking and writing paints the character of his mind and heart unconsciously, therefore we should make every effort to render our mind true and our heart right. We shall never succeed in so doing if we do not frequently examine ourselves, and implore without ceasing the help of God to dissipate the darkness of our ignorance and destroy the corruptness of our heart."

(June 1726).

These remarks, which were dictated by the most unreserved friendship, gave no offence to Antoine Court. He knew the high esteem Du Plan entertained for his character ; and therefore accepted his criticisms with thankfulness and profit to himself.

The letters of Du Plan at this period are more numerous, longer and more instructive than at any other ; it is evident he had the time for and took pleasure in writing them. It is in this rich correspondence that he reveals to us his fine soul animated by a single passion, the glory of God, and a single desire, the good of the Church. He continued, though absent, his work of counselling and directing his friend, and of interesting himself in the sufferings of his brethren. Often did he deplore having been obliged to leave them, for he was not ignorant of the immensity of the work and the scarcity of workers, but by bringing to bear all the living forces

of the Church he endeavoured to rectify the misfortune.

"It is necessary to increase the number of elders to make up for the deficiency of pastors and to exhort parents to supply the place of ministers to their children."

(April 1725).

This scarcity of pastors was troubling Court also; he was virtually alone with Cortiez and a few preachers bearing the burden of the Churches. He frequently implored his friend to appeal to the zeal and devotion of foreign ministers, but though Du Plan exerted himself to the utmost he could not prevail on the refugee pastors or foreigners to go into France.

"It is to heaven," he wrote to his friend, "you must look for preachers; they will not listen to that voice, which while it calls them to the instruction and consolation of those who groan under the Cross, also calls them to martyrdom. Flesh and blood is too weak to obey; it needs nothing less than the efficacy of prevailing grace displayed by God to those only whom He pleases, and who are generally very weak instruments, to the end that unto the Lord may be all the glory."

(April 1725).

Du Plan, at the same time, had good reasons for thinking that the idea of calling pastors from abroad was not altogether a happy one. Would not their presence in France, in consequence of the peculiar situation of the Protestants, be more inconvenient than advantageous?

"If foreign ministers came to our succour, the fact would at once be discovered, and as the ministers themselves-

would be much more readily recognised than the pastors of the country, they would stand in greater danger of being arrested; the Court would suspect a revolt, and this above all things it is necessary to avoid."

(November 1725).

In order to compensate for the absence of pastors, Antoine Court urgently asked for religious books. The Bible and the books of Psalms had been burnt, and it was one of the greatest hardships inflicted on the Huguenots by their persecutors that they were deprived of the Divine book. Was not the Bible the inseparable companion of their lives, the friend whom they consulted every day, the endless source of their consolations and hopes, and the sole foundation of their faith? This loss carried with it other grave inconveniences. "Deprived of the book which they believed to be divinely inspired and to which they appealed as to an infallible guide, the Protestants were liable, in abandoning themselves to the flights of their imagination, to fall into a dangerous mysticism. No longer holding converse with the Bible, there was reason to fear they would soon cease to hold converse with God Himself, a fear not altogether groundless, as already some whimsical theories on Inspiration had been expounded." ¹

The country being too poor to purchase books, Du Plan set himself to work among his friends at Geneva to collect money, which he often supplemented from his own private resources when the sum

1. Edmond Hugues, already quoted, Vol., I, p. 50.

was insufficient. The books bought were Testaments and the Psalms—but mostly Testaments—also works on morality, treatises on the Communion, the Catechisms of Drelincourt, Osterwald, Superville and Saurin; *The Preservative against corruption, or Treatise on the sources of corruption*, by Osterwald; *Indifference to religion*, by Pictet; as well as *The Mystical Manna of the Desert*, by the same author; *Morality*, by Pictet, and his *Theology*; the *Sermons* of Claude, the *Exposition of the Forty Articles of the Confession of Faith*, &c.

The great difficulty was to import the works into France, the frontier being rigorously watched for suspected books; but the zeal and discretion of Du Plan surmounted all difficulties. Through his management brave colporteurs undertook, at a thousand perils, to introduce the works. With their packs they crossed the border, and having hastily deposited their precious burdens in a safe place, passed on. The books, once received, were distributed after the sermons, when everyone eagerly ran to obtain them. Some were sold to those who could afford to pay, while others were given to the poor or placed at the disposal of the preachers. The following letter of Du Plan shows the interest he took in this work, and above all in the brave colporteurs who risked their liberty on behalf of the Church.

“ You have asked me, my dear friend, in some of your letters to send you some books, and you tell me that zealous persons here ought to defray the expense. I reply, in the

first place, that the inhabitants of this country very honourably support their ministers as well as their poor ; the latter increase daily, either owing to want of employment or to the vanity and avarice which prevails in the dwellings of the rich. After having sought for more than eight months in vain, I have found a favourable opportunity of sending you some packets of books, though the difficulties at one time seemed almost insurmountable. Charity having furnished only some old books and about twenty crowns, I have made myself responsible at the bookseller's for goods to the amount of one hundred crowns, as I would rather spend all I possess than allow a favourable opportunity to slip of affording to my country the means of instruction and salvation for pastors and people. May God by His grace safely conduct the escort, and bestow His blessing on all the preachers of Lower Languedoc, the Cevennes, and Vivarais. M. Cortiez and you will select what you wish and distribute the remainder according to your discretion. I hope everyone will be satisfied, and that you will with pleasure lend to one another what each may specially receive.

"Should the man who risks his goods, his liberty and even his life, to procure means for the salvation of his country get into difficulty, I hope the Churches will not abandon him. I beseech you all, for the love of Christ, to interest yourselves on his behalf. The man is poor and has suffered many misfortunes, and he would not have been able to undertake the enterprise at all had I not encouraged him and supplied him with means. If I have done anything for the good of my country, to God be all the glory ! I commend myself to the prayers of the faithful, that I may still be useful to the Church. My Saviour has loved it and shed His blood for it, and I would, through the help of the Lord, make, or wish to make, the same sacrifice. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

(10th of September 1725.)

The smallest detail furnished to Du Plan an occasion for the display of his fine spirit, the noblest

sentiments even at these times would flow from his Christian pen.

"I belong no more to myself," continued he, "but to God who has redeemed me with His blood, and who animates me by His spirit in order that I may be wholly devoted to the service of His dear and well-beloved Spouse. Courage, my dear brother! never let us lose courage, whatever we see, or whatever we hear; let not the most fearful tempests and storms have power to move us; we have a Pilot who commands the winds and the waves, let us not permit Him to slumber through our negligence or indifference! Let us cry to Him without ceasing in the words of the superscription on the seal which I send to you by our brother Deleuze; '*Save, Lord; we perish!*' If we pray to our kind and omnipotent Saviour with all the humility, ardour and confidence of which we are capable, we shall undoubtedly soon witness an end of the storm everywhere and a succession of mild and genial weather by which the earth will be made to bring forth fruit and barrenest trees to bloom. Toil without ceasing to sow, weed and cultivate the soil which Providence has committed to your care, and may the blessing of God, my dear friend, be upon you and upon your work; may it also descend upon your fellow labourers and upon all who invoke the name of our Lord. Never fear your foes, however numerous they may be; you fight for the Lord of Hosts, and if you are faithful to Him the victory will surely be yours; yet a little while, our enemies shall be confounded and the truth shall appear with such brilliancy that the shadows of superstition shall everywhere be dispersed; the idols of the nations shall be destroyed, and all shall adore the one and only God, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; all shall cry, Hosannah! Blessed be He who cometh in the name of the Lord! Alleluia, Alleluia! Praise the Lord! To Him alone be all the glory, majesty, dominion and power!

"All that I say is true; it is no chimera or effect of an

excited imagination. I have for my authority the Holy Scriptures, and the marvels which God has done, and is still doing, by His grace in my dear country. I have for my authority the love of God which is shed abroad in my heart; this love never deceives us if we pray for it and consult it with humility and faith; it is an infallible oracle which gives us glimpses and foretastes of the triumph of the Church on earth and in heaven. Love is God Himself, according to the explanation of the beloved disciple. All who are really animated by love are inspired of God. God makes Himself known unto them and reveals unto them His secret thoughts. Let us not deceive ourselves as to the nature of this love. Saint Paul has given us an admirable description of the virtue in his Epistle to the Corinthians. It is for us to examine whether we practice it in like manner.

* I will at present urge my arguments no further, because I wish, if it please God, to write to you again soon. I therefore conclude, my dear friend, by assuring you of my perfect goodwill, and by expressing sincere and ardent wishes for your welfare, for the welfare of your beloved colleagues and of all our Churches. Assure our dear brethren, by whom I have the honour to be known and loved, that I am, and shall be all my life, their good friend and faithful servant. I specially salute your wife. I trust you will write to me soon. Your two illustrious friends and a great number of noble and pious persons of both sexes and all ages, salute you, and offer many supplications on behalf of yourself and your companions. The Eternal, who has preserved you and delivered you from the hands of your enemies by a striking miracle, will keep you until the day of full fruition. May the cloud of divine protection encircle you in all places and at all times; may the angels of heaven attend you like Jacob, and may no cruel Esau ever have power over you or your brethren. God soften the heart of your enemies! God enlighten their understandings and give them grace to serve Him—the Judge of the Universe—as He wills, and as He is worthy to be served. Adieu,

my very dear friend, Adieu. I embrace you and am, much more than I can express it, your very humble and affectionate brother and servant.

BENJAMIN."

10th of September 1725.

There was no physical or moral suffering to which Du Plan was a stranger; he was as solicitous for the pastors as for all the members of the flock, and especially for those of them who were victims to the rigour of the times. His thoughts constantly recurred to the most unfortunate of his co-religionists and went forth to the dungeons and the galleys; he felt himself constrained to stir up sympathy on their behalf. He willingly forgot himself in caring for others, and his charity extended to every one who suffered for righteousness' sake.

"I learn with regret," he wrote, "that those who serve the Church are scarcely ever fully paid, though they are so few in number and their wages so very moderate. Moreover sufficient attention has not been given to the galley slaves and prisoners. Is not this, however, an inalienable duty of the Churches, and is it not rather from want of love and intelligence, of care and management, than of money, that sufferers for the Gospel and servants of the Churches are deprived of necessary support? As for myself, I ask for nothing. God will be my support and my recompense. I will, through His grace, sacrifice not only my goods and my worldly prospects, but my life, if this sacrifice be required by my country and the Church. Let your colleagues and elders rest assured of my true sentiments on this subject, for I express them as they occur to me. I will spare no efforts for the consolation and deliverance of my brethren, and will with my whole heart solicit heaven and earth in their favour.

"It is necessary to give all possible help to Dauphiny, for the more widely we extend our charity and good works the more will God be glorified, and the more shall we be glorified in Him; the less foreign help we receive towards the triumph of the truth in our country the more credit we shall receive from our fellow countrymen and from strangers. Nevertheless we ought not to act from this motive alone; it would be vanity and we should risk paying dearly for a little show; let us cleave unto God wholly and with a single heart, without regard to the opinions of men. Alexander and Cæsar were in some measure justified in seeking the world's praises, for they did not know, as we know, the things of God; but we should be very blind and very guilty to abandon the Creator for the creature, to prefer time to eternity, and to chase the shadow while we lose the substance. Let us occupy our minds about God, heaven and a blessed eternity, we shall not then be disappointed in our hopes; we shall possess here the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and in Paradise we shall behold His face which is a fullness of joy for ever. God grant it, by His grace!"
(April 1725.)

Du Plan heard with joy of the revival of the Church notwithstanding the fire of persecution, and was deeply affected on reading such details as the following, given by Antoine Court on the occasion of his marvellous deliverance:—

"I have had abundant and touching proof of the attachment and tender affection entertained by our people for their pastor. Their fear of having lost me for ever after my sad adventure at Alais and their pleasure at my reappearance impressed them so vividly, that words fail them in which to testify their attachment, their grief, and their joy. I know not how to prove to you the respect in which I am held.

"I can recall but few occasions when our largest assemblies reached two or three hundred persons, and

when one of them surpassed that number it was considered little short of a miracle. Now the Assemblies are considered but indifferent if they do not exceed two or three hundred. In the course of my rounds I have held several meetings at which the numbers approached a thousand persons, and at one there were more than twice as many; the communicants were so numerous that during the administration of the Lord's Supper, nine or ten chapters of Holy Scripture were read and the Commandments chanted, besides the whole of the XI. Canticle and two or three selections from the Psalms. A remarkable circumstance was that this Assembly was convoked at the break of day, lasted till noon and separated as quietly as if it had been held in St. Peter's.¹ O Divine and adorable Providence thou art profound and matchless in all thy doings! God render us sensible of such striking and distinguished proofs of Thy love! Though the event terminated happily, my dear friend, the step did not appear to every one here altogether wise and prudent. Should you find it the same I leave it to your judgment to make an apology for us; the scarcity of preachers, the great number of the faithful, the famine which pinches them, the pressing need they have of consolation, and their zeal, added to the precautions which are the inseparable companions of our doings, will furnish you with abundant means for our defence."

(9th of July 1725).

In this same letter Antoine Court conferred with Du Plan on a very important and interesting question—the confederation of the Churches of Dauphny and Vivarais with those of Languedoc. It was considered essential to combine their scattered forces in order to make a better stand against persecution. To this end, Roger, who had accom-

1. The Cathedral at Geneva where Protestant worship is celebrated.

plished in Dauphiny the same work of restoration that Antoine Court had accomplished in Languedoc, had assembled a Synod in June, 1725. It was there decided, as a proof of complete and lasting union, that all the Churches should adopt the same rules as the Churches of Languedoc. Nevertheless it was thoroughly understood that this deference did not imply any avowal of inferiority, and that Languedoc, in taking the initiative in this measure, did not in any manner aspire to any sort of domination whatsoever. It was in this sense that the arrangement was understood by the brethren at Geneva.

"It is essential," continued Court, "to explain to the Churches of the Vivarais and Dauphiny those terms either in our rules or in the Synodal letter which, though they may in appearance be stern and even despotic, are not so in reality. We are not friendly enough with the proud and blind Vatican to adopt its maxims or to imitate its conduct. Thanks to Thy mercies, O my God, we are taught in a school where we have learned that he who is esteemed the greatest ought to be the servant of him who is the least. God is not well pleased that we should attempt to establish in our midst an authority which Jesus Christ, our Divine Master, took so much pains to banish from among his beloved disciples. We would disapprove and denounce all that has the slightest appearance of it, and agree with pleasure to correct the smallest expression which might seem to favour a principle so worthy of condemnation."

(9th of July 1725.)

Antoine Court was sufficiently interested in the financial position of his friend to speak his mind freely on this subject.

"I fear," he wrote to him, "that you conceal from me things which you ought frankly to disclose. If I hold in your mind and heart the place apparently assigned to me by your letters, why hide anything? Have the goodness to speak on all subjects with an open heart, and as a bosom friend ought to speak. I need not explain myself more fully, but if further comment is necessary, you have only to remember that since you went to sojourn at Geneva, I have known as little of the state of your affairs as of the inhabitants of the Southern Hemisphere. If you do me the favour to refer at all to the subject, I know you will not do it by halves."

(9th of July 1725.)

Benjamin Du Plan replied to him immediately :—

"You wish me to acquaint you with my affairs, If concerning the temporal I will inform you that they are in such a condition that God alone can help me. The person who is willing to aid me¹ has his hands tied, he can sell nothing at present, and what with losses and expenses his income is greatly reduced. Fifty *louis* were sent me, but they were not nearly sufficient, and I have borrowed considerably. If Providence does not intervene, it will be necessary to reduce my expenditure. Though I desire to maintain a certain position, I do not wish to be chargeable to any one, and it is with regret that I consent to the Churches co-operating in the collection of a small sum to defray my unavoidable expenses for future journeys. I will not however accept even this help, until after all the pastors of the country have received their salaries; and Providence has failed to furnish me with other means. I wish to receive nothing from the Churches, being sufficiently rewarded by the glory and happiness of serving them."

(27th of July 1725).

1. This was a Monsieur Treillis of Alais, a great friend of the family of Du Plan and who had taken in hand the pecuniary interests of the young refugee.

Benjamin Du Plan tried sometimes by curious methods to improve his position ; he subscribed to a lottery. Unfortunately this plan did not succeed, and though the attempts were repeated he was never successful.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST JOURNEY OF DU PLAN IN SWITZERLAND.

October and November, 1725.

As soon as Du Plan had received his credentials he occupied himself in the fulfilment of his delicate mission. But he was soon impeded by want of money. He had not yet received the fifty pistoles which the Synod had voted him, and the help from his father was insufficient to meet the cost of his journey.

He wrote in the month of September to his friend :—

“ I have not yet been able to set thoroughly to work, owing to want of money. The outlay already incurred has greatly exceeded the help I have received from my relations. I almost lose hope, the obstacles which interfere with this, as with all good designs, being so numerous.

“ Affairs in the North and in Germany are in a critical state. It is not yet known whether war will break out or whether an arrangement will be possible. Reasonable and pious men counsel me not to engage in my undertaking without the means necessary for success ; I therefore patiently await the manna, and by whatever way it may come I shall look upon it as from heaven. Meanwhile perhaps my pre-

sence in this country may be of some service to our Churches. Please inform me what effect your letters have produced touching the collections for the support of the ministry, and for the expenses of the Deputation to the Powers. As you have not referred to this subject for some time, I have reason to fear that your exhortations have been like seed cast into sterile and badly cultivated ground. There is always a great difference between promise and performance. It is much easier to draw out a good plan than to put it into execution. May God grant me grace to serve our Churches in much humility and without reward. Those who would give, cannot; and those who could give, will not. It is grievous, but we must nevertheless have patience. A time will come, if it please the Lord, when the husks will burst and the chestnuts will fall in abundance. God will implant His charity in the hearts of the covetous, and the poor shall suffer no more. O happy age, when wilt thou arrive? Let us hasten it, my dear friend, by our zeal for God, by our love towards our brethren, and by our diligence to fulfil all the duties of modesty, virtue and temperance. If the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much, let us be righteous and God will hear our prayers."

(September 1725).

Antoine Court replied to him immediately :—

"The Synod has been held. The preparations for it were successful, and the resolutions good, but the means of executing them failed. We need preachers, and need money for their support. Those who serve are not paid. Thirty per cent. has been deducted from their salaries and for the remainder they have received only paper. Instead of eleven hundred *livres*,¹ which we require, but two hundred and eighty and some odd *livres* have been raised. Do therefore what you can for the Churches that suffer under the Cross, and whose advocate you are. The word *Cross* may inspire

1. "Livre" is occasionally used by French writers as a convertible term for "franc".

you at such a moment, and perhaps I am not wrong in bringing it to your remembrance.

"It was proposed that you should go into Germany, and to the North, but the great difficulty, want of means, marred our intentions. Fifty pistoles have been voted to maintain you for the present, while waiting for further help; it will supply your most pressing needs. I have not yet received the sum, but will work incessantly to obtain it. O God, will there never arise another Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America, who without being under the necessity of going from Potentate to Potentate or appealing to any Philip of Spain, shall appeal direct to Philip the Evangelist?; or shall there never again be seen any Cyrus, Artaxerxes or Nehemiah, who touched by our misery shall bring us more speedy and effectual relief than money can supply? Then not alone Ethiopia but countries more distant shall resound with our praises! Patience! God who is in Heaven is good, He is omnipotent, He will provide all things, and while hoping and waiting for His help, I will not allow any difficulties or oppositions to weaken my courage or relax my zeal. Our preachers have asked for their discharge, less perhaps with a view to obtain it than to arouse from their lethargy our elders, the majority of whom are discouraged with the first bad collection or with the meanness and unworthiness of the offerings. But I appealed to them, exhorting patience, and they have submitted, each one having again with renewed zeal taken possession of his own department in the vineyard of the Lord."

(September 1725).

Du Plan, however, did not wait to receive the money that had been promised him and which there was so much difficulty in collecting: in company with a preacher named Chapel, he commenced a short journey of two months duration. They visited the principal towns of Switzerland, including Berne,

Zurich, Neuchâtel, and Lausanne. For the sake of economy they travelled on foot. "They were received everywhere with a respectful sympathy, and great astonishment was evinced when Du Plan related in the towns still attached to the old Calvinistic traditions the sufferings, incessant persecutions and martyrdoms which had been endured during a ten years struggle and the success with which that struggle had been attended. The man who had been delegated to the Churches of Switzerland by his brethren of France and who had himself been a witness of so many extraordinary events, became a man of eminence—little short of a hero."¹

At Zurich, Du Plan obtained from their Excellencies the Magistrates sixty louis d'or; while the German clergy and the French Church promised to contribute their share to the relief of their persecuted brethren.

At Neuchâtel, the deputy collected thirty crowns, and the excellent M. Osterwald, pastor of the Church, personally furnished a large case of books, the greater number consisting of his own works.

It was at Lausanne, however, that Du Plan left the most salutary traces of his progress. He was received there with the warmest affection by the chief families of the country, and with their co-operation he realised one of the great ideas of Antoine Court, in founding a Protestant seminary.

1. Edmond Hugues, already quoted Vol. I. p. 281.

As foreign pastors could not be prevailed upon to court martyrdom in France, it became necessary, as soon as possible, to supply their place by procuring for some young students the means for prosecuting their regular studies. Du Plan assembled in secret certain pastors and friends of Lausanne, such as Polier and De Montrond, &c., in order to deliberate on this grave question. The delicate point was to know to what College it would be most expedient to send the young students. Geneva, constantly threatened by France, was out of the question; Berne was not much less so and for the same reason, while Zurich was German and too far out of the way. Lausanne, then a dependency of Berne, was finally selected. Their Excellencies the Magistrates of Berne, at the request, probably, of certain eminent and influential friends, such as Dachs, D'Hacbrett and others, courteously consented to the opening of a private college, but on the express condition that it should remain in obscurity and make no stir. This condition was accepted.

The Churches were able to provide for the expenses of a single student only; but later on, thanks to the exertions of Du Plan, the number gradually increased in a few years to six. The first student was Bétrine, a pious and zealous young man whom Court had formerly encountered on his rounds, and had consecrated to the holy ministry. Bétrine set out for Lausanne in 1725. He was intelligent, though like all the preachers very ignorant, and having no notion of Greek or

Latin was unable to follow an academical course. Time pressed, the number of preachers diminished daily under the fire of persecution, and it was necessary to replace them. A few willing and talented men thereupon undertook to give the young student private lessons, the more rapidly to complete his education, and in the space of a few months he acquired all his theological instruction.

On his return to Geneva, Du Plan found awaiting him the letter from his friend describing the want of generosity among the faithful. He hastened to reply, and to acquaint him with the results of his first journey.

“Monsieur, my dear friend,

“I have just returned from my journey into Switzerland in company with M. Chapel. I have been absent more than two months, which will account for my not having replied to the several letters that awaited me at Geneva. Scarcely had I received yours, when I resolved to give you evidences of my sincere and tender friendship. I commence then by praising the Lord, who in spite of the misery and peril to which the preachers are exposed in our unfortunate country, raises up persons to overcome these troubles. I praise God further for the good will of many worthy Elders who warmly interest themselves for the good of our Churches, though I am a little disappointed that they cannot carry out their good designs. God permits many obstacles to try the faith, patience and charity of His servants. If from the discharge of our duties we derived honour, pleasure and worldly prosperity, our diligence might be ascribed to ambition, avarice or voluptuousness. We must be poor, we must be despised, we must suffer, in order that God may be glorified, the Church edified, and our enemies forced to

acknowledge our single heartedness as well as the genuineness of our faith.

"I am much obliged, my dear friend, for the particulars you have given me of what has transpired in your locality. I beg you to thank, in proper time and placé, all those persons who have chosen me for their deputy. I feel myself more honoured by this office than if I were the ambassador of the greatest King on earth, because an ambassador generally occupies himself with temporal and political affairs alone, while I shall entirely occupy myself, if it please God, with those things which concern eternity and the welfare of our beloved Churches. You will oblige me further, my dear friend, by thanking the Synod on my behalf for the fifty pistoles it has voted me; when the money shall have been collected, you will have the kindness to inform me, though I do not wish to touch it, except in the last extremity, and until the preachers have been paid. I placed more than twenty pistoles in the lottery of Geneva to try if Providence by that means would permit me to serve the Churches gratuitously and even to send them money; but the event has shown that God wished to prove me, since I have had the worst possible luck. I received the news with great tranquillity, and seemed to hear a voice within me saying: —'My grace is sufficient for thee; seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all things requisite for thy present state shall be given thee from above.' There might have been more or less of vanity had I been able to say that I laboured gratuitously and gave without receiving. If my intentions are good, they will be as acceptable to God who knows the heart as the acts themselves, and I shall not be in danger of becoming vain or arrogant.

"It is now time I should give you a short account of my journey in Switzerland; I need hardly assure you that my aim has been to gain for my brethren under the Cross all the help they can fairly hope for. I was favourably received in all the towns through which I passed, and recognised and honoured as the deputy of our Churches. Everywhere has

the Lord been praised for the blessings His mercy has accorded to us in the midst of our greatest troubles. Much surprise was created and interest felt at my description of our state and our doings; a thousand good wishes were expressed on our behalf, and some presents which will afford you pleasure were added To supply the place of pastors you will receive a number of books, not alone for the preachers, but for many among the flock who have not the means wherewith to buy.

"I can at present give you but a short account of my journey. I have many things to tell you, but I will reserve them for my next letter. If M. Chapel could see you at Nismes or at any other place, he would tell you many things which cannot be committed to paper.

"We must perfect, as soon as possible, the state of our Churches, in order that I may be able to challenge enquirers. We have more need than ever to pray earnestly to God to make us upright, prudent and active; things are at a crisis.

"M. Bétrine has received your letter, and will send a reply; he salutes you, and prays you to send his little allowance in advance, if possible. His sister also salutes you, as well as all the persons who are dear to you. We pray that God may bless and preserve you all by His wise Providence. Le Sieur Chapel will be at Nismes about the 7th or 8th of next month; endeavour to see him."

(November 1725.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SYNOD OF 1726 AND BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

While the deputy of the Synods was travelling through Switzerland awakening evidences of sympathy, and sparing neither care nor trouble to acquit himself faithfully of his mission, his enemies were

endeavouring to injure his influence with the Churches and even to withdraw from him his certificate of deputy. Great was his grief when on the return from one of these fatiguing journeys he received from his friend the following letter :—

“ Monsieur, and dear friend,

“ It is possible that the subject of my letter may surprise you, but I cannot be silent on this occasion without betraying your interests, the interests of the Church, and my pledged friendship for yourself. Some persons whom I believe to be concerned in your welfare are not altogether satisfied with your conduct on the subject of the so-called Inspired, and public rumour, which is often neither trustworthy nor discreet, having already aroused commotion in our provinces, many are complaining. I have made ineffectual efforts to stem the torrent, and if you do not second me you will not easily re-establish yourself in the minds of some persons who deserve consideration, whatever estimate we may form of them or what position soever they themselves may hold, either in the world or in the Church.

“ My object is not to ascertain whether there are or are not veritable Inspired ; this has always been a subject of discussion between us. Though otherwise very much alike, on this matter we have always been the antipodes of each other, your experience persuading you that there are Inspired and mine that there are not. Incredulous as I am on this point, I will agree with you for a moment that there are true Inspired ; what then is the inference ? Is it a fundamental article in our religion without which we cannot be saved, that we should believe in the doctrine of Inspiration and associate with those who pretend to be Inspired ; or is the subject one of indifference ? You are too sensible to persist in the one, and I do not see how you can reasonably deny the other. All you can say is that, Inspiration being a gift from heaven, it demands the praises of those who have

either received it themselves or who have discovered it in others. Is it not however possible, I would ask, to fulfil the obligations involved by a belief in Inspiration, without failing in the great precept of charity which forbids us to offend the weakest of our brethren? Do we risk being lost by not making an open profession of a doctrine which we affirm to be of no absolute necessity either in religion or for salvation? and in matters of religion is it not wise to act on the principle of having regard to appearances in small things? We hear St. Paul saying to us: 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' and should we not do more than follow the apostolic injunction and abstain from things which, though innocent in themselves, might occasion evil to others? It is well not to do anything by which thy brother stumbles or is offended.....

"You have motives of another kind which merit no less your attention than your own interests. It is only rendering you justice to avow that you have a strong ambition to serve the Church, and that you are willing to sacrifice your goods, your repose, and even your life on its behalf; the experience we have had of your exertions and professions unmistakeably assure us of the fact. But if you are not careful to keep a stricter watch over your conduct on the subject in question, or neglect to act on the principles I have just set forth, you will incapacitate yourself for the fulfilment of your engagements and promises, and even your zeal will become unfruitful and useless. What a result! It is as natural as it is certain that the Church will lose its confidence in you, that you will in a manner force it to withdraw the august mission it has conferred upon you, and that you will lose the credit you have acquired abroad, a credit so necessary and so important in the execution of the undertaking with which you are charged. Pray take care, my dear friend, to refuse nothing to a Church for which you surrender so much, and take care also to abstain from a too frequent and open communication with those persons whose sentiments she does not absolutely approve. This sacrifice

ought not to be very great, but if it were a sacrifice much more considerable, a man in your position ought at once to make it. It is true I do not demand this in the name of the Church, for as yet I am but the echo of the rumours and complaints which are circulating amongst us, and I have no special instruction to write to you on the subject, but I have thought that my ministerial duty, added to the friendship which exists between us, rendered the act indispensable. All I ask for in reply to my straightforward statement is a prompt change if you are in fault, and for my sound advice, a careful study to render yourself approved in all things by the persons who interest themselves in our affairs, and by the Churches you have the honour of serving. If you do this, as I trust you will, you cannot doubt that it will give me great satisfaction, and that it will not tend to diminish the esteem and the perfect devotion I entertain for you and with which I am, your faithful servant,

COURT."

3rd of November 1725.

Du Plan hastened to reply :—

"Monsieur, my very dear friend,

"I take up the pen with the intention of satisfying all you can desire of me, if I am happy enough to succeed in my project.

"I do not exactly know what has been written from this place to the Province to occasion complaints concerning my views, provided no untruth has been uttered it matters little to me what may have been said as to my belief and my conduct in regard to religion. I have not shaken off the yoke of Popery, that ferocious and formidable beast, for the purpose of becoming a slave to certain private opinions. I consider as such all opinions which cannot be tested by evidence from Holy Scripture. In fact I recognise in religion no other authority than that of God. If my faith or my morals are contrary to the dogmas, I am ready to yield as

soon as I am convinced of my errors, but let no one flatter himself that either promises or menaces, rewards or chastisements, shall be able to make me renounce that which I believe to be true and right. I believe that God has in these latter days poured out on several persons the gifts of His Spirit; there are but few who have been faithful; for this reason God has withdrawn his favour and delivered them over to a spirit of error and iniquity. Such judgments as these should make all the instruments God employs for His glory to tremble, but not to despise His gifts which are always excellent in themselves and very clear to those who have received them. God grants and withholds his favours as He pleases. In ascribing to Him the glory it is for each one to make a good use of the gifts by devoting them to the edification of the Church and to his own sanctification. Though I despise with my whole heart all false doctors, pastors and prophets, I do not believe that any doctor or pastor has the right to ask me to despise anyone in whom I discover the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or any prophet the right to call upon me to despise a doctor or a pastor in whom I discover a language consistent with the Holy Scriptures. It is by the Scriptures that I examine the pastor, the doctor, and the prophet. When certain pretended Inspired have cried against the ministry in general, under the pretext that some ministers preached error or lived inconsistently, I have vigorously battled with such pretended Inspired; and even when certain ministers, whose character and merit I respect, have unreservedly and without distinction rejected and condemned all those who in these latter days call themselves Inspired, I have not yielded to them without a shock to the integrity and sensitiveness of my conscience. I do not blame those who have no belief in sudden inspiration; for this evidences are required which God does not accord to everyone; but if I had, or believed I had, these evidences, why should that faith which is neither contrary to the truths of the Gospel, to strict morals, or to ecclesiastical and social discipline, be despotically denied to

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me? Let us rather cherish the desire to do more and more good, and not pretend to rule the faith of other people by our own, in regard to things which affect neither State nor Church.

“ Though I believe that God has accorded in these last days the gifts of His Spirit, I am persuaded that among those who battle with sudden inspiration I have done more than anyone to eradicate fanaticism,—the shadow or corruption of inspiration—as Popery is the shadow or corruption of Christianity. It is very certain that the priests or ministers of Roman Catholicism are much more numerous than the Protestant ministers (would to God the good Protestant ministers were in greater number amongst us than the bad!); but be that as it may, this great number of false priests and bad ministers, who all call themselves servants of Jesus Christ, ought not to hinder us from recognising as true and faithful ministers of God the small number who acquit themselves of their duty, as the great number of imposters, visionaries, fanatics, and profligates, who call themselves Inspired ought not to hinder me from recognising that God has honoured with His gifts a few persons whom I have heard, but whom I seldom hear now. I am careful not to offend anyone, but if any who keep a stricter eye on my conduct than their own advise me to discard that which has been very useful to me, and which has brought me into close contact with the preachers of the Desert, I shall regard them as very indiscreet, and if there be any offence at all, it will be an offence received and not given. Jesus Christ has been a stumbling-block to many; so much the worse for the stumblers. The magistrates and clergy of this town not only tolerate but protect certain persons who believe themselves to be inspired, provided they do not disturb the established civil and ecclesiastical order. It is only a few of the inconsiderate who raise the hue and cry without knowing what is in question. As for myself, I love everyone, and I am happy to live with all pious persons, whatever may be their views, provided they are not contrary to the articles

of our Synod or of our faith. I have friends of all sorts and conditions who honour me with their esteem, which is in no way diminished, though they know my sentiments. I never concealed them; I have confessed them in public and in private; they neither hindered me from serving the Churches usefully nor from being chosen as deputy. I have, thank God, successfully fulfilled my duty as deputy, wherever I have gone; the magistrates and the clergy have received me with respect and kindness, and I have awakened, above all, love for our Churches. I regard the result of my efforts for the Churches only as the first fruits of my mission and as an earnest of the abundant harvest which will follow, when Providence shall have opened up to me the whole Protestant country.

"I am preparing myself for my travels; endeavour to collect the fifty pistoles which have been assigned to me, I trust that my Swiss journey will produce for our Church more than two hundred pistoles. Thus I shall not be a burden, and a part of the money can be employed in paying the arrears due to the preachers, or in binding books. I will do my utmost to forward you some other packets of books.

"I have received two letters from M. Roger which inform me that Dauphiny has also chosen me as deputy; he acquaints me with the state of the Churches which he serves; he is a man who is spoken very highly of at Lausanne and who appears by his letters to be prudent as well as pious.

"M. Cortiez has also written to me. He is evidently very much annoyed that you have treated him as an inferior. I think there must be some misunderstanding, or else the Devil is trying to sow discord among you. There is no occasion to enfeeble ourselves by envies and strifes; we are too weak already; let us prefer one another in honour, and strengthen ourselves in the Lord to fight vigorously against the multitude of enemies who surround us. As to myself, though I have received great provocation, I am willing to make to the Lord a sacrifice of my just resentments. It there are any in the Province who murmur at my

sentiments on the subject of inspiration, tell them that the Magistrates and Clergy here (who are much more powerful and enlightened than they), tolerate and uphold them, tell them also that their duty and their interest should induce them to keep silence and strive to be good Christians in order to obtain the blessing of God. If I could identify my calumniator in this place I would compel him to change his language by the most ample proof of my orthodoxy and good faith and thereby bring my enemies to shame and confusion! Tell me everything and do not fear that I shall make a bad use of the information; I fear God, and love my neighbour, though he may be mean or malignant enough to injure me. Do not speak of these things to many."

(14th of December 1725.)

This letter had scarcely been despatched when Benjamin Du Plan discovered the necessity of again writing to plead for union.

"Monsieur, my very dear friend.

"My mind has been so impressed by the reproofs and threats contained in your last letter that I wish to reply to it a second time, and thus endeavour to make amends for having so long delayed writing. Some of our friends, to whom I have shown your letter, seem to think it very fruitful in ideas and expressions. You study your words carefully and express your feelings well. The chief thing is to fix your thoughts and affections as much as possible upon objects worthy of your mind and heart; your soul is more or less noble, according as it concentrates its love and care on things more or less excellent. I speak with all the sincerity and frankness of a true friend, when I say that though your genius is admired it would be more worthy of esteem if you would simplify your style and not present such a variety of ideas in the same discourse. Your first letter

is good and full of spirit,¹ though I object to the association of sacred things with things or expressions which savour of jest; when it is remembered that you are under the Cross and are treating on the most interesting subjects, it is to be feared that this mingling of the sacred and the profane will offend God and expose you to His anger. What a calamity for yourself, for your Rachel, for me, and for our beloved Churches! There is a time for everything—a time to laugh and a time to be serious, a time for joy and a time for sorrow. But what times are these O God! Are not our temples destroyed, our pulpits broken down, and our flocks dispersed, deprived of pastors, and surrounded by ravenous wolves; are we not so to speak perpetually on the eve of extermination! Can we not and ought we not to cry with the disciples who were in the little boat on the point of shipwreck, 'Save Lord, we perish'? I confess that I have failed in my duty to our afflicted churches from the very first, a failure for which my conscience sharply rebukes me. The world and the flesh have occupied a great part of the precious time which ought to have been devoted to the service of God and of His Church. Do not fall into the same error, my dear friend, but make better use than I have done of days which might at any moment be cut short by a thousand unforeseen accidents. I have always loved pleasure and merriment and all that delights both body and mind, but when I think of my end and of the exact account I must render to God, I am dismayed and dread the fate of the unfaithful servant who buried his talent, of the foolish virgins who had not taken care to trim their lamps, or of the prodigal son who squandered his inheritance; then I cry to my Divine Saviour from the depths of my soul, for deliverance from the fatal allurements which surround us, Alas, miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!

1. Du Plan probably refers to Court's letter of September 1725, see page 129. The praises of the pious delegate appear to us undeserved.

But after I have implored help from my God, I feel conscious of a new enlightenment of my understanding and a new fervour in my heart to form resolutions afresh in accordance with His will. A thousand times blessed shall I be if I am firm and faithful in these resolutions. We are easily beguiled by the fascinations of this world; our flesh, like the traitress Delilah, often lulling us to sleep only to deliver us into the hands of our enemies. O how excellent, how useful, how necessary for the salvation of our souls, is the precept of our Lord, 'Watch and pray'! Let us, my dear friend, watch all the emotions of the heart; it is deceitful and desperately wicked; if we do not resist its solicitations, we shall undoubtedly be led astray; let us not be satisfied with simply examining and trying ourselves, but let us implore the help of God in our examinations and researches; let us never undertake anything without ascertaining our views, our objects, and our ends, and let us make sure that we are not seeking to gratify our own ambition, avarice, voluptuousness or other vain and criminal passion. Let us not think that it is a sufficient justification to do good deeds or to say good words before men; the Pharisees and Hypocrites attracted the people by their doings, but the things which are great before men are often an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. You are aware, my dear friend, what St. Paul says in his epistle to the Corinthians: Though I speak with the tongues of angels, though I have faith to remove mountains, though I bestow all my goods on the poor, though I give my body to be burned, if I have not charity I am nothing and am become as a tinkling cymbal. St. Paul after this gives us a beautiful description of Charity. O lovely charity incarnate in Jesus Christ! will not Jesus Christ implant it in our hearts if we pray to Him with humility, faith, earnestness and perseverance? My only resource, my dear friend, is in prayer. Though incapable of redeeming time lost, and unworthy of appearing before my Creator, I never lose hope, for the blood of the Man-God has been shed to cleanse me from my sins, and the Spirit that

gives life can quicken my barren soul to bring forth fruits of righteousness and holiness to the glory of His Holy Name. Like Abraham and Sarah I have faith, though there seems little hope of my serving the Church usefully or of seeing its deliverance accomplished. Hitherto my conduct has been a mixture of good and evil, of light and darkness, but the Sun of righteousness will at length arise to dispel error and vice, not from my mind and heart alone, but from the mind and heart of all the elect upon earth. This, dear friend, is the object of my prayers and desires, treated though I may be as visionary or fanatic. I am well aware that there are abuses, false visions, false revelations and false prophecies, nevertheless I believe that some of them have been, and yet are, good and true, and that God will permit me to see their accomplishment. I have no objection to your imitating St. Thomas, so far as to believe only that which you can see and touch; but take care not to despise, still less to condemn things that you have neither seen nor heard and which are beyond human ken. Aspire only to preach the pure Gospel as well by precept as example. I will endeavour on my part to become more worthy of the love of God, the esteem of good men and the tender and sincere affection of my dear and faithful friend Court, whom I embrace in spirit.

" Your letter to me concerning my conduct is well written clear, precise, spirited, natural, and fluent. For one who denies inspiration altogether I consider your arguments as sound and able; to them and to you I will accord all the respect and consideration my conscience will allow—a friend can scarcely demand more. I am certain that the persons who write to our country spreading evil reports concerning me would refrain if they could know the love, esteem, and respect entertained for me (unworthy as I am) by numerous persons, illustrious for their piety, character and birth, and with whom I am on terms of intimacy. If you will name the author of the reports I will ask him to repair the mischief he has done, and if he be unable or unwilling to do this, I will

employ such other means as will satisfy all reasonable people ; but if nothing more is said let the matter drop."

(19th of December 1725.)

The opposition against Du Plan broke out on the occasion of a collection being made in the Churches—at the instance of Court—to defray the Deputy's expenses. Everybody refused to contribute towards the remuneration of a man who upheld the Inspired and who was said to have profited by his tour in Switzerland to propagate his peculiar ideas. Court formally denied these accusations, whereupon his opponents produced certain letters written from Geneva by the refugees Jourdan, Rey and Delor.

"All my representations were in vain," wrote Court to his friend, "I could obtain nothing, the event has thrown me into despair. I have more than once been on the point of adopting violent means, and I am so heart-broken and overcome with grief that my tardy resolution to write is scarcely surprising. In the name of God furnish me with the means of rebuking this Jourdan and obliging him solemnly both by word of mouth and by writing to withdraw his accusations ! I know of no means so likely to rebut objections and restore tranquillity as an attestation, signed by those most qualified to judge of the matter, that your conduct is perfectly satisfactory. The attestation should be accompanied by a letter addressed in the form of an apology to the next Synod. Perhaps this remedy may be successful, but no doubt the evil is very serious. Your knowledge of the dispositions of those with whom I have to deal should be sufficient to make you realize my position. I should not mind if the discontent of the preachers did not make them the first to declare that as your sentiments are unworthy of the Churches' deputy they dishonor the Churches themselves, and that the withdrawal of your credentials becomes,

consequently, imperative. This is the way in which even the most moderate speak. Consider then my position and judge of my ability to oppose prejudices so passionate and determined! Once more, I beseech you, furnish me with arms for your defence and spare no pains to ascertain the most effective means of remedying the evil; we are acting for God, for the honor of religion and for the welfare of the Churches. Let nothing divide us in this noble cause; let not opposition, malignity and ignorance divert us from the object of our zealous aspiration, and, at the same time, let us endeavour to adapt ourselves to the capacity of those with whom we have to deal. God commands and charity dictates!"

(12th of February 1725.)

This letter, doubtless, overwhelmed the heart of the zealous deputy with sadness. Calumny, ingratitude, and repudiation of honorable engagements, such was the recompense of his incessant toil on behalf of the Churches! What must the noble hearted gentleman have suffered in his dignity and self respect! He knew, however, how to repress every feeling of bitterness, and while condescending to justify himself prepared all the attestations demanded by his friend. In the meantime he felt himself constrained to address that friend in the following truly Christian letter.

"Monsieur, my dear friend,

"I have received your letter of the 18th of February and though I appreciate your great exertions on my behalf, I am not at all satisfied with your excuses for so great delay in writing. Your letters, though moneyless, would have been welcome and would have elicited for you my deepest sympathy; therefore, my dear friend, if you wish our friendship to endure in undiminished strength, endeavour to cultivate it more carefully.

"I have seriously reflected as to the rumours that have been spread abroad concerning me, and as to the measures proposed for punishing me for my presumed bad conduct. I think it would have been wiser if the persons who have written or spoken against me had either used different language or kept silence altogether; at least they should have acquainted themselves with the facts. I think also that there has been a little too much readiness to credit the accusations against me, and even had these been true there was no reason for not collecting the money which had been voted me by the Synod after prudent and just deliberation. It is not the business of a few individuals to set aside the statutes of a corporate body, which should be regarded with veneration if its deliberations have been guided by considerations of prudence and charity. The scarcity of money is no legitimate pretext for a neglect of duty; the country served by the preachers is so extensive and populous that if each person gave only one *sol*—a sum so small that it would not occasion inconvenience—a large amount might be raised. There is consequently either negligence or incapacity among the elders, or ingratitude among the people. I pray God from my heart that every one may know and fulfil his duty, but if we do not discharge it better than we have hitherto done I fear we shall be more severely tried and chastened than in the past. Our daily renewed life and means of support are wonders of the infinite mercy and Providence of God, and if by reason of pride, idleness, ingratitude or other wicked passions we are rendered unworthy of His protection and favour, we are lost. What are we that we can live in the midst of powerful and enraged enemies almost innumerable! I only tremble when I reflect thus, and it is but reasonable that I should thus reflect. We should if we were wise not only endeavour to please God by keeping His Divine Commandments, but frequently humble ourselves before Him, praying with earnestness that He will complete the work of rekindling the Lamp of His Word in our country, which by His infinite mercy He has commenced since our downfall

and ruin. Oh how happy should we be if there could be seen conspicuous amongst us, the piety, zeal, wisdom, virtue and charity of the first Christians and of our fathers in the time of the Reformation! God would then in His grace, and by our good example, appease the fury of our enemies, convert them and deliver us from their yoke, and we should see the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ established throughout the earth.

"I have somewhat enlarged, my dear friend, on a theme which is precious to my heart. Would to God our thoughts, desires, words and actions might dwell more frequently on the subject of the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ and that they might not be so readily dissipated by the things of this world. Let us endeavour to work together with real earnestness for our own and for others' salvation. It is thus alone that we can please God, and receive His blessing.

"To return to myself, you counsel me to rebuke *maître* Jourdan for his indiscreet zeal. He well deserves it, but I have rather preferred asking the Pastor of his district to whom I communicated your letter and who was displeased with him, to treat him with all the gentleness possible. I should like to have been present when he was sent for that I might have urged forbearance towards him. He acknowledged his fault in having failed to communicate a scheme of such importance to his Pastor, and there is reason to hope he will, as soon as possible, repair the mischief he has done in giving utterance to the falsehood. I will write to *Sieur* Rey himself to ascertain what he has said against me, and will also endeavour to find out whether *Delor* merits attention. Few people were aware of the true motives for my journey to Switzerland, it was desirable for important reasons not even to refer to the subject. It is not surprising therefore that each one has argued according to his own ideas, though it is unfair to form a judgment without a knowledge of facts. God will not allow such rash judgments to remain unpunished at the last day.

"Although my best vindication is to lead a holy life, to

act prudently, and to procure further help for our Churches, I will not fail according to your advice to send you an apology for presentation at the ensuing Synod. Meanwhile you may communicate the contents of this letter to those whom you may judge proper, and may say to them that it is but just and fair to send the money that has been voted to me as soon as the Synod shall have deliberated as to the best means for its collection. As evidence that my tour in Switzerland was not made with the intention attributed to me, you may refer to my favourable reception from persons eminently distinguished for their rank and piety, to the help I have received from them, and to the fact that I could if I wished pay my own stipend, but that I prefer to owe my recompense to the Churches' equity rather than to the power with which I am endowed; and further, that I would earnestly desire to serve the Churches gratuitously were it not that my relatives furnish means for my necessities only and not for maintaining a correspondence with several places in Europe, still less for travelling.

I mention, between ourselves, that I have put my name to a bill for five hundred *livres* in order to provide for unavoidable expenses, and if God does not endorse the bill, I have great fear of becoming bankrupt. I repeat, however, what I have already written both to M. Cortiez and to you, that I do not wish to receive my allowance while the preachers remain unpaid. . . .

"Salute all our brethren and ask them to be less credulous; if I have some envious enemies, I have a greater number of influential friends than is imagined. I may state that in spite of the slackened charity that exists here consequent on the derangement of commerce and through which numerous families are in great distress, I have obtained unaided the means wherewith to replace a horse and some clothes which had been lost by *Sieur Chapel*. I have also obtained for *M. Bétrius* sufficient means for the completion of his studies without having recourse either to the Churches or his relations; I have received several special favors, and if the

poverty of the Churches is too great to prevent their providing my allowance, I have friends enough here to supply funds for the discharge of my mission; but unless the distress be extreme it were no honor to our numerous Churches to withhold an allowance so solemnly voted me. I would rather be paid by the Churches, in order that I might the more effectually plead their cause. In France I received nothing, and was thus in a better position to seek aid for the Pastors, but now I must be enabled authoritatively to demand succour for the Churches.

"Think over all I have written to you, my dear friend. You are, with M. Cortiez, at the head of our Churches of the Cevennes and Lower Languedoc, and it is expedient that you should be firmly united in your efforts to awaken them. It is of the first necessity to infuse into the minds of the students a spirit of wisdom, charity and union, in order that you may have in the Synod and elsewhere but one voice and one motive. For this purpose it is advisable to hold special conferences for discussion and prayer, to the end that God may be among you and bless your plans. When the subject under consideration is of importance it will be well to summon the Elders of the neighbourhood and discreet men from other localities to your deliberations. Proper measures must be taken to enlighten the ignorant or insufficiently informed Elders as to the subjects selected for discussion at the Synods. Those who are led away by their temper must be brought back to a knowledge of their duty. The busybodies must be reprov'd in a forcible and dignified manner, and threatened with Divine judgment and the Churches' excommunication. It is desirable when the Synods meet, and in view of the short time during which they can remain in Session, that everything should be well understood, prepared, and almost resolved upon among the chiefs beforehand.

"I say again that I have many influential friends, thanks to the Lord, and if I have enemies the greater part are of no consequence. They make great outcry behind my back but

in my presence they change their tone and language; the most conspicuous pretend to be my friends, but their protestations are worth nothing, for they throw the stone with a concealed arm.

"Please reply as early as possible to this letter and at the same time tell me the probable date of the next Synod. I hope soon to send you a letter for the Pastors, and another afterwards for the Synod

"Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace you in spirit, and if after I have sent you all the attestations in my power I should yet be forced to relinquish my office through blind injustice and ingratitude, I will always remember the good men and still remain your faithful friend and very humble servant."

(8th of March 1726).

Benjamin Du Plan followed the advice of his friend. He sent the required attestation from the Venerable Company of Pastors of Geneva and addressed a long letter to the Synod explaining his conduct, and justifying himself against the absurd accusations which were laid to his charge.

"The evil reports that have been circulated in several parts of the Province have occasioned me much distress. Some persons have said that I was driven out of Geneva; others, that I went to Switzerland to visit the fanatics and to spread their ideas; others, that I abandoned the meeting-house, in order to shut myself up with visionaries; while others again have said that if I attended the meeting at all it was simply as a matter of policy It is indiscreet on the part of private individuals to disparage me in my public capacity I have long been known to the Churches, and have been allied from the commencement with the chief Pastors and Elders. I have taken part in several Synods, helped to make rules, addressed petitions to the Powers and

written pastoral letters to the faithful. I have offered prayer and given exhortations both in general and private Assemblies in town and country. I have consoled the afflicted, assisted the poor, visited the sick, the prisoners and the galley slaves. As by a miracle, God preserved me for several years in the midst of my enemies. At length I became so well known to the Roman Catholics, and was so closely watched that I was obliged to leave my home; and, subsequently, by the advice of my relations and friends I quitted the kingdom. It was with regret that I abandoned my country and the Churches, and I should have been inconsolable at my separation from relations, friends and brethren in Christ had no opportunity been granted me of employing on their behalf the talents which I have received from God. On my arrival at Geneva I was worn out with the care I had bestowed on the Church of Alais during the pestilence, by missionary rounds in the Vaunage and the Cevennes, by over study, and by the journey to Marseilles and Geneva during the hot weather. These things combined have thrown me into a low state of health which has not permitted me either to study or travel. But now that God by His grace has restored me, though I have a very delicate constitution, I am desirous, with His help, of traversing both land and water on behalf of my brethren, and it is for you to cooperate with me in this object."

(15th of April 1726).

Du Plan's explanations did not disarm his enemies. They meditated a conspiracy against him, and for this purpose attended the general Synod which assembled in the Desert on the 26th of April, 1726. The conspirators were led by Cortiez who had already seized opportunities at various Conferences of raising discussions hostile to the Deputy, the avowed object of these intrigues being to obtain from the Synod the revocation of his appointment.

Antoine Court courageously faced the storm. He read an attestation from the Venerable Company of Geneva exculpating his friend, and a letter from Du Plan himself to the Synod in explanation of his conduct. Cortiez, unable to withstand Court, endeavoured to gain his point by main force; he demanded that the question of the maintenance or deposition of the Deputy should be at once put to the meeting without discussion, and charged a young student to collect the votes. As the majority of the Synod was against Du Plan, the result would have been his certain recall. Court however anticipated the manœuvre by reminding the student that he had no authority to collect the suffrages. In a passion Cortiez snatched the pen and paper from the hands of the student and prepared to undertake the office of teller. Court restraining him, demanded a hearing, and in an eloquent discourse pleaded warmly the cause of his friend. We cannot refrain from publishing this defence—so creditable alike to him who delivered it, and to him on whose behalf it was uttered :—

“Is it necessary, my very dear and honored brethren, on so important a day and in the midst of an Assembly so venerable and religious as that before me—is it necessary that I should be constrained to undertake the defence of a man whose life has always been irreproachable, a man of piety so exemplary, zeal so fervent, and who has served the Churches so long and so usefully? What demon can have issued from the infernal regions to put us to this necessity? What enemy to our peace has, under the guise of friendship, entered into our midst, in order to prejudice

our minds against a member so worthy of our esteem and love and so essential to the good of our Churches.

"Let us endeavour to ascertain the crime of which he is accused. Is it that he has taken money belonging to the Churches? No! Is it that during his youth he was so weak as to embrace the Roman Catholic religion? In reply I ask whether it is not well known that he had the resolution to throw off its yoke, and that Providence in a manner simply permitted the star to obscure itself for a time in order that it might shine with greater brilliancy in the firmament of our Churches? Is it that in his youth he loved the military profession? Now everyone knows that not only is this inclination natural and general among all young men, especially among the nobility, but that religion never condemned it; and that when the soldiers came to John the Baptist, that man who was more than Prophet did not tell them to abandon their calling, but only to do violence to no man and to content themselves with their wages; moreover every one knows that this young warrior only practised himself, so to speak, as a soldier in order to become more intrepid, firm and courageous among the soldiers of the Lord, and more assiduous in the work of the Church. Is it that he loved pleasure? Alas who amongst us is innocent enough to throw the first stone, and who does not know that the love of God, the love of our neighbour, respect for religion, and efforts to propagate the Gospel have not always afforded the sweetest pleasure? Is it that he has wasted the money he collected? It is a well known fact that not only were we indolent enough to allow six months to elapse after the appointment of a Deputy without assigning him any remuneration, but unjust, ungrateful, and wicked enough subsequently to withhold that which had been solemnly adjudged to him, and further that he never spared his superfluous, and sometimes even his necessary, means to maintain the preachers at a time when they were abandoned by all. Tell me then, O Du Plan, what is thy crime! Is it not that thou hast always appeared too eager

in the service of the Church, too zealous in thy efforts to procure the peace for which she sighs, to console her mourners, and to help her poor and needy? If it be considered a crime to lavish a noble enthusiasm on objects like these, I know of no terms that will characterise thy crime; and if thou art found guilty, I know not how thou canst adopt a better course.

"You, who are his accusers show yourselves and make your complaints without further delay. You tell us that our Deputy is infected with fanaticism, that he believes in the Inspired, that he made a journey into Switzerland to propagate his ideas, and to strengthen his party, that he dishonors our Churches by his sentiments, that he despises the advice of his best friends and that in a word he is incorrigible. Mark these accusations carefully, are they true? You who make them, tell me by what authority you do so. These are questions worthy of this Assembly. Are you that august Senate which sits in the city where our Deputy is sojourning—a senate even more venerable than that illustrious Senate of ancient Rome; or are you that far famed Company of Pastors who assemble in the same city once a week to regulate ecclesiastical affairs? Are you acting under the direction of these bodies or of some of the members who compose them, for you must of necessity be acting under one or the other to merit the attention of this assembly? Or are you but a few private individuals who frame your complaints and accusations without authority or common consent,—acting under a delusion, real or assumed, or an imprudent and excessive zeal? If such you are, if motives such as these have guided your pen and shaped your language, let not this assembly take any heed of your complaints. Need I tell you, dear and illustrious brethren, that they who have been so hard on our Deputy belong to this latter class and that they are not of sufficient importance to deserve consideration? What, on the simple testimony of a bungler and an idle tatter, dismiss our Deputy, and deprive him of the credentials with which he

has been solemnly invested ! What folly ! What inconsistency !

“ He is said to be infected with fanaticism ; but are you sure that it is fanaticism ? A fanatic is a man possessed by an evil spirit, influenced by mania or hypochondria, speaking only of visions, ecstasies, transports, and persuading himself that he is a prophet, able to work miracles. Is this the character of our Deputy ! Has he not always displayed strength of mind, a wise understanding and a sound judgment ? Has he ever been heard to speak of ecstasies, visions and transports ? Has he ever boasted prophetic gifts or ability to work miracles ? Public and private discourses which have so often fallen from his pious lips, learned and judicious letters,—matchless fruits of his pen, offsprings of his toil and productions of his genius—wise and renowned personages who are now the joy of his life and eye witnesses of his conduct, disputes and combats waged against fanaticism, and you my brethren who have known and associated with him, you, even his enemies, come all and bear witness to the truth ! Come and put us to confusion if we speak not the truth !

“ It is said that he believes in the Inspired. This is a subject which calls for some discussion. Firmly convinced of the fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit and the Divine grace of our Lord, he believes that God in these last days has directly bestowed His Spirit on certain persons, some of whom he personally knows ; but does this imply a belief in all who are extolled as prophets ? Has he not on the contrary frequently contended against them ? After God, is it not to him that we owe the downfall of one who had enticed away some of our people ? Is it not he who detached from the cabal of Vesson its principal supporters ? Is it not he who wrote forcibly against the senseless troop of Montpellier ? And is it not in consequence of his letters which were found in possession of this eccentric band when it was seized that we owe his flight and exile from the town of his birth ?

"It is said that he associates with the Inspired. In my humble opinion it would have been better if he had not done so, seeing that the weak minded were thereby offended and the censorious and the ignorant so much scandalized. But, after all, how does he even in this respect contravene Scripture? He tries the spirits, and are we not commended by St. John for so doing? He proves all things, and does not St. Paul exhort us to do likewise? He despises nothing which he takes for prophecy, and would you wish that he should do so, after the prohibition of St. Paul? But perhaps you may say that when the Apostle enjoins us not to despise prophesyings he refers to prophecies which are so in fact, and not to those which have merely a semblance of reality. It may be that our Deputy is mistaken, but he does not think so; his error is that of his judgment only, and to induce him to abandon this error it is necessary rather to enlighten his judgment than to constrain his will—a man's opinions are not to be rooted out by despotic and arbitrary proceedings; he must be convinced of his error before a change of ideas and sentiments can be demanded, and though this may be difficult to accomplish there is no reason why we should not persevere in our efforts; a man who is shaken in his belief without being convinced is weak minded, and deserving only of contempt or pity, while on the other hand a man who is firm and resolute in opinions which appear to him to be founded on the Holy Scriptures, in spite of all that may be said or done against him, is strong minded and worthy of our admiration and praise.

"But sentiments such as these in question, it may be said, are not to be tolerated in our Deputy. I grant that if they are contrary to the principles of the Reformed Religion, if it be a grave error in our Deputy to believe that there are still true prophets, if this belief causes him to act contrary to the maxims of our religion, if for the sake of what he calls prophecies he ceases to frequent the holy Assemblies, to preach and to receive the sacraments, if he break off communion with the faithful and forms a separate sect, then our

laxity would be not only a crime but the greatest of follies. I should be the first to denounce such folly, and to take from him those credentials which rightly belong to and are destined alone for one of the strict and faithful observers of the tenets of our holy religion. But who will dare to maintain that the error of our Deputy (supposing it be an error) has ever led to such consequences. Has not his zeal for the assemblies, for preaching and for participation in the sacraments always been of a special, if not of an eminent, order? Have we not seen him indefatigably exerting himself far and near, day and night, to restore peace to the Church when it had been broken by busybodies, or to bring back to her bosom that unfortunate offspring whose dissensions had lacerated her tender heart; and further still is he not always the first to attend religious exercises in the country where he at present resides?

"But I hear you return to the charge and say that you wish our Deputy absolutely to discontinue associating with those who call themselves Inspired. I have already said, and say again, that I wish it still more. Would to God our wishes might be fulfilled! Yet his conduct is apparently authorized by the Holy Scriptures. He proves all things to keep that which is good, he tries the spirits to find out those which are of God. If by so doing he wounds our too sensitive feelings let us seek a remedy for the evil in being less sensitively refined, and without violating his conscience or desiring despotically to overrule his sentiments let us prescribe for him such rules as will satisfy all reasonable minds. We are not bound to satisfy unreason, for duty does not require it and the burden is too heavy.

"But what consideration, it may be said, ought to be shown to a man who not only believes in the Inspired, who is not only content to associate with them, but who undertakes journeys expressly to stir up fanaticism and to strengthen the fanatics. What proof is there for this statement? Calumny! What is its origin? The devil and the infernal regions! Our Deputy too long inactive forms the design of making a

journey into Switzerland. Thereupon certain envious, or at least indiscreet, persons wishing to penetrate his thoughts and ascertain his intentions, and not being able to do so, conjure up chimeras and shadows and upon this foundation build up an edifice of dreams. They take appearances for realities, and being fanatics themselves they believe that our Deputy visited Switzerland simply to foster fanaticism, and subsequently endeavour to persuade us into the same belief. Shall we be credulous enough to accept these dreams? God forbid! Where would be our discretion, where our understanding? If, my brethren, you desire to know the true motives of our Deputy's journey, ask the political and ecclesiastical bodies of certain renowned Cantons, witness the favorable reception accorded to him by those bodies, and the rich gifts by which his reception was followed, and you will learn by undoubted proofs that his great idea—his principal motive—was to interest powerful friends and to procure important succour for our Churches. If such a motive as this merits our disapproval and justifies our depriving him of the character of Deputy with which we have solemnly invested him, it must be admitted that we are strange folks, and who, I ask, would henceforth care to exert himself in our service? It has been frequently said that it would have been more desirable to be Herod's pig than his son, because the tyrant following the teaching of the Jews spared his pigs while immolating his son to his vengeance. In a like manner, if the good deeds of our Deputy should lose him our favour it would be better to feed and tame monkeys and lions than serve as our Deputy.

"It is said that he is incorrigible in his sentiments. Yes, as to sentiments which he believes to be founded on the Word of God! He despises the advice of his best friends. Calumny! Who is not convinced to the contrary? Who is not satisfied that he has drawn up a strong case? If he does not defer to certain creeds, is it not because he is unable to do so conscientiously?

"It is said that he dishonors us by his opinions. They

who hold this view must be very sensitive as to honor! Have the sentiments of our Deputy, we repeat, ever led him astray or made him do anything contrary to the precepts of our holy religion? I appeal to the consciences of the most obstinate. He believes there are true Inspired; does religion teach us that there are not? St. Paul says that prophecies should cease, and in this the Apostle seems to be right, for in his time they had already approached or were approaching their end. I do not conceal from you that I have long held this idea; but after all, this single passage is not sufficiently explicit to convince us that since the publication of the Gospel until the end of time there shall be no more prophets, and I am not aware that any theologians of our communion have ever contested the belief of certain persons, that if it pleased God He could yet send prophets unless such a mission should be opposed to revelation; so that the only difference between our Deputy and those persons is that while they believe there might be true prophets if it pleased God to send them, our Deputy believes that God has so pleased. As for ourselves we are so prejudiced that if an angel were to descend from heaven in the guise of a prophet to announce to us things of the utmost importance we should refuse to hear him. Should we by so doing act wisely? Would it not rather be better to find out whether his message was the true Gospel or a fable? We are a formidable people; we would annihilate all who in the least degree oppose us, and after the example of certain of the disciples of our Lord demand that fire might descend from heaven and consume those who will not conform to our ideas and sentiments. Is this the spirit of the Gospel? Is not that spirit one of forbearance, gentleness, and love?

"When I come to examine the Inspired I find them to be of two kinds—wilful imposters and weak minded fools who, led away by a desire to become prophets, and encouraged by the pretended predictions of other false prophets persuade themselves at last that they really possess prophetic gifts and seek to impress others with the same belief. The

former deserve stern remonstrance and exposure, the latter are worthy of my compassion, my counsels and my prayers. Does it follow because our Deputy is of opinion that there is a third kind who are good and true that he casts a slur on our good name, or dishonors our Churches? If they whom he so much esteems wish to introduce into our religion a new worship like that introduced by certain monks of Liège into the Romish Church some centuries since, let them be anathematized. If they suggest to people the abolition of certain customs they regard as hurtful, though the customs in question may have existed for ages, let them be accursed—let us drive them out as imposters and deceivers! and if our Deputy should adopt their opinions and practices, if he be not himself the first to denounce them, let us deprive him of his office and let us hurl our censures at his head; but if his views be orthodox—if, to his apprehension they are in harmony with the Gospel, or at least not opposed thereto, and if he reckons as Inspired only those whose inspiration is in accordance with Scripture, let us cease to speak of dishonor. That which dishonors us, my brethren, is the toleration of crime, being sparing in our censure of transgressors, and a general laxity of discipline; neglecting to succour our poor, to provide for the wants of our confessors, suffering in the assemblies certain contentious characters whose presence tends only to perplex our affairs, and who like the mountain in the fable make great groanings in the bringing forth of a mouse; failing to keep our engagements by refusing, as we hitherto have done, to pay our Deputy the just recompense solemnly promised to him; and lastly venturing to discuss at the mere instance of a bungler or of persons without authority the withdrawal from our representative of an office with which he had been invested in an Assembly similar to this, and confirmed by one yet more illustrious. These are the things which are dishonorable to us my brethren!

“Let us venture to hope that what has been now said has sufficiently justified our Deputy in the eyes of this

assembly; to suppose the contrary were to suggest an insult to your understanding. Bear with us, however, dear and honored brethren, if to our apology we add reasons which should imperatively constrain us to maintain him in office.

“First reason : The necessity of having a representative in foreign countries. The necessity is obvious; abroad our condition is very imperfectly understood—we need to be represented there by a person of ability in whom we can implicitly confide, a person who will depict facts as they are, solicit for our Churches the protection of the Protestant Powers and endeavour to persuade them to intercede with our august Monarch for the toleration of our faith.

“Second reason : The character of *Sieur Du Plan*, than whom we could have addressed ourselves to none better. He has all the intellectual and physical qualities which the position demands. He has birth and education, a lively imagination, a strong mind and a sound judgment; he speaks well and writes better. All these gifts are happily combined with a natural docility, a rare scholarship and a zeal beyond compare. This is an urgent reason.

“Third reason : Good faith and fidelity to our engagements. How could we deprive our brother of his quality as our Deputy without breaking our word and doing an injustice?

“Fourth reason : Our personal honor. To deprive our Deputy of his office were to confess our ignorance and fickleness; our ignorance, because this act alone would prove us incapable of making a suitable choice, and that our heedlessness is so great that we accept or reject a man on the impulse of the moment; while, on the other hand, our infirmity of purpose would be apparent (supposing our selection to have been a right one) in our vacillation, and we should acquire a reputation for weakness, and for inability to remain constant to our choice; so that in whatever light our proceedings might be viewed, we should become objects of ridicule and expose ourselves to charges of ignorance and fickleness.

“I could adduce a fifth reason—our own interest; for if

we were capable of acting as proposed towards our Deputy, who would henceforth care to devote himself to our service?

"I could also add a sixth—in the good our Deputy has already effected, a happy prelude and a sure guarantee of that which is to follow—but I come now to my last reason,—our incompetence to withdraw his credentials and ignore the grounds on which they were granted, even though we should be sufficiently unjust to harbour a design so unworthy. Without the unanimous consent of all the confederated Churches in National Synod we are powerless, and it cannot be permitted to us, who are but a section of the Confederated Churches, to act alone and revoke a measure of which all have approved.

"But why dwell so long on the subject? Do I not already hear you assent to the withdrawal of the indictment? Do I not already see you eager to tender again the right hand of fellowship to our Deputy? Let us then conclude his defence! Let us cease to urge reasons for maintaining him in his office, and while he prepares himself for his work let us do all we can to further his efforts; let us pray to God that He may accompany him on all his journeys and that He may turn our deliberations to His glory and to the well being of our beloved Churches. Amen and Amen."

26th of April 1726.

At the close of this eloquent and fervent discourse, the Assembly declared itself convinced and satisfied; a few friends warmly defended the absent Deputy, but his fierce opponents though silenced were not subdued.

On hearing of the happy issue to this grave affair, Du Plan heartily thanked the Synod and with due submission pledged himself to terminate his relations with the Inspired.

"Since certain zealous but misinformed persons," he wrote to Court, "have written in condemnation of my con-

duct and as it has become in consequence a source of scandal in the Church, notwithstanding that I have forwarded testimonials bearing the signatures of the venerable Consistory of this city, I unconditionally engage for the love of peace and the edification of our Churches to take no further part in the assemblies of the Inspired, and to shun their society—so far as charity will allow—while acting as Deputy.

“ And as the Churches are poor and unable to pay me the salary they have promised, I ask nothing of them either for the past or the future, hoping that with the help of God, and that of my relations and friends, to be enabled to render them better service than has hitherto been possible owing to the prevailing troubles.”

(28th of May 1727.)

He addressed the following pastoral letter to the Synod:—

“ Messieurs, my very dear and honored brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ ; the grace and peace of God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son be with you.

“ Although I have been careful to inform our dear and well-beloved brother M. Court, with whom I am in correspondence, of all that concerns the interests of our Churches, and, although I have no doubt he has made you acquainted with everything proper for you to know, I have considered it my duty to add this letter in order to assure your pious and honored assembly of my warmest affection and most sincere respect as well in spirit as in truth. It is neither flesh nor blood nor any temporal interest which has bound me to your service, but God alone by His infinite mercy ; and nothing shall make me abandon it save death itself, or your unanimous resolution to withdraw from me the credentials of Deputy which yourselves, by a formal vote, have done me the honor to confer. Everyone has his enemies ; neither Kings with all their power, nor Saints with all their wisdom, are protected from the slanders of the malevolent ; how,

therefore, can I, a poor and helpless sinner, called by my vocation to attack the Empire of Satan and Anti-Christ, hope to screen myself from envy, hatred, and false reports? But thanks be to the Lord, though I am not free from errors and failings, my intentions are upright, and though I am not so blind or insensible as to believe I have no enemies, my friends are even more numerous and more powerful than my foes. Of this, my dear and well-beloved brethren, you have convincing proof in the honorable testimonials given me by the venerable Consistory of this town, and which our dear brother, M. Court, has presented in full Synod. I could, if necessary, send you other vouchers of my good conduct and of the manner in which I have sustained the glorious office it has pleased you to confer upon me, notwithstanding my incompetency and the malignity of my enemies.

“ Perhaps if the Churches had taken heed to supply me with a colleague, as I have more than once demanded, and furnished me with the means of travelling, at least on foot, I should have procured them more assistance than I have been able to do; but what has already been, or is about to be procured is not to be despised, although the accident which has happened to poor Genoulhac has occasioned considerable loss to the Churches, besides the cost to me individually for the temporary maintenance of his poor wife and three young children, who are in a manner the victims of their father’s zeal in the service of the Church. In truth it had been on my part ungrateful, and even cruel, had I not done all I could either alone or with the assistance of friends to mitigate the sufferings of this poor and desolate family who at present are partially supported out of the French purse. You can scarcely, my dear and well beloved brethren, reproach me while you withhold the five hundred *livres* per annum you have promised, and of which I have hitherto received only two hundred and fifty *livres* for two years service. I have been under the necessity of borrowing a sum of money to enable me to discharge the duties of my office, but God who has hitherto provided will, if it please

Him, yet provide. If a colleague is given me who does not possess the credit I enjoy, his wants must be supplied in order that my enemies may not reproach me with uselessly squandering the money belonging to the Churches. I shall not be a burden on the Churches, but hope rather to do them good service. I would pour out my blood to the last drop, rather than needlessly use the substance of the followers of Jesus Christ my Saviour. I have several times written to M. Cortiez and M. Court that I have no desire to receive my allowance until after the preachers have been paid; I would that I were in a position to maintain them all, it would then be evident with what devotion I am drawn towards my beloved country and my dear friends and colleagues in the work of our Lord. All I ask of you, my dear brethren, is that you do not lend too ready an ear to calumnies, that you give heed to the credentials I have received from one of the most venerable Consistories in the world, that you bear in mind that we all have our errors and shortcomings, that no one is without his enemies, that I ask of you neither gold nor silver, but only your sympathy and prayers; for these are due to me in return for the sincere and heartfelt love which I have borne you ever since I first engaged myself in your service, risking and abandoning all for your sake, and being always ready to sacrifice all my remaining possessions for the edification of the Church.

"Though in a worldly point of view your condition is sad, though you are, as it were, but a little flock of sheep in the midst of many wolves ready to devour you, I am convinced that God will work miracles on your behalf and effect your deliverance, if you be mindful to humble yourselves before Him, to repair your shortcomings and to make daily progress in the Divine life. I am desirous you should know that the Cardinal who at present rules France is guided by the Pope and the Jesuits, and that he only awaits the return of peace in Europe to banish Protestantism from France; humanly speaking it will, on the conclusion of peace, be an easy task for this Cardinal to suppress our religion,

seeing that he possesses all the authority he needs and controls an immense armed force with which to overrun the Province. Do not be misled therefore by the calm you at present enjoy. Do not be like Jonah who slept in the vessel while it was on the point of being wrecked. Haste, haste my brethren to make your peace with God before your ruin is decreed! Your condition is much clearer to me than to yourselves, owing to the information I obtain here of all that transpires in Europe. It is absolutely impossible to avert your ruin, unless God takes your cause in hand. Your position is as hopeless as that of the Israelites when they were pursued by the Egyptians and the sea barred their way. I feel the truth of what I say much more forcibly than I can express it; and I repeat that if you have not God on your side you are utterly lost. Open your eyes then, my brethren, and rouse yourselves; plead incessantly with the Eternal to take pity on you! Why do you wait, when your enemies are so eager to sacrifice you to their blind and cruel zeal; has neither past nor present experience taught you that you are prisoners and slaves, sheep destined for slaughter, victims who on the conclusion of peace will assuredly be sacrificed to superstition? It is no pleasure to me, my dear brethren, to be a prophet of evil. I warn you of coming troubles in order that you may escape betimes. Up to this present has God restrained the billows that threatened to overwhelm you; He has calmed the roaring winds and assuaged the storms that raged over your heads. The terrible decree of extermination issued against you has not been executed, but this great mercy you owe to God alone and to the prayers of a few honest souls. Let not your preservation, however, be regarded except as a respite accorded you by God, in His loving kindness, for prayer and repentance. Let each one by the help of the Eternal look into the innermost recesses of his heart and remove all impediments to Divine love. While exhorting you, my brethren, to repentance and sanctification, I am sincerely and firmly resolved, with the help of God, to cast

off all the rags of the old man, and to be clothed again in the Lord Jesus. God has not hitherto blessed all my undertakings and labours because I have failed in my duty, nevertheless I trust with His aid and through your prayers to be of more service to you in the future than I have been in the past ; only let your prayers be offered in faith and love, and be zealous and sincere, otherwise they will be of no efficacy and you will assuredly be lost. If it is the prayer of the righteous alone which availeth, I beseech you to be righteous in all your doings and you will undoubtedly receive from the Eternal more than you can ask or conceive. God only awaits your repentance to work miracles in your favor. The arms of justice and of mercy are already extended to execute vengeance and to bestow blessings. Depart out of Babylon, my brethren. Come unto the new Jerusalem ! 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well,' if you desire to avoid perdition and to become partakers of the peace and salvation which God has prepared for His children.

"I renew my prayers to heaven on your behalf. May God, by His infinite grace, give power to my words. May God give you aspirations worthy of His love. May God deliver you from the hands of our enemies, visible and invisible, and render me an effectual instrument for your happiness. With these sentiments, my dearly beloved brethren, I conclude, and am your very humble and obedient servant in our Lord Jesus Christ,

BENJAMIN DU PLAN."

10th of May 1727.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SYNOD OF 1727 CONFIRMS DU PLAN IN HIS OFFICE.

1727.

The enemies of Benjamin Du Plan, though vanquished by Antoine Court in the Synod of 1726, were not discouraged; they again demanded the deposition of the Deputy at a Synod held the following year in the Vivarais, hoping possibly to gain their ends through the absence of Antoine Court; they failed, however, to take account of Jacques Roger who was Moderator of the Synod and a great admirer of Benjamin Du Plan, though they ought not to have forgotten the esteem and affection that had been evinced for the Deputy of the Churches by the intrepid and indefatigable pastor of Dauphiny at the Synod of 1726, and of which he had given proofs while courageously defending the accused. The following in the beautiful pastoral letter he wrote on that occasion to the Pastors, Students, and Elders of the Synods and Churches of Languedoc and the Cevennes.

"I do not know how to express to you the satisfaction felt by the Consistories of our ten little Churches on hearing that you had graciously summoned us to enter with you into a solemn treaty of union. But this feeling of satisfaction, which increased daily on receiving the letters of M. Du Plan and other distinguished persons, was almost turned into one of distress on hearing from M. Du Plan himself, as well as from another eminent and pious nobleman, that there had been circulated base calumnies about M. Du Plan to the effect

that he favoured fanaticism, and that in consequence thereof it was proposed to withdraw his credentials as Deputy and withhold the five hundred *livres* promised him at the recent Synod in the Cevennes. The intelligence has so taken me by surprise that I have thought right to communicate it to our Consistories.

"Now as there is nothing more certain than that M. Du Plan, by his enlightened understanding and his labours, has proclaimed our rights and procured for us many good friends as well as very important aid, we can but entertain a strong hope that the consolation and even the entire deliverance of our Churches will be accomplished, if God continues as heretofore to bestow His blessing on the Deputation. How sad is it to witness an enemy to the peace of the Church marring an enterprise of such vast importance—one too which apparently tends to advance the glory of God and the salvation of lost man! What, because God elects to make use of certain weak instruments to maintain true Christianity in the kingdom, and because M. Du Plan recognises the fact with other discerning men, is he to be regarded as a fanatic? Because he maintains with all wise men that the wanderers should, after the examples and doctrines of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, be brought back with gentleness, and that all things should be proved in order that the good may be retained, is he to be accused of favoring fanaticism? If so, it is necessary to overthrow the truth and turn a deaf ear to conscience, as it is undoubtedly the fact that these maxims are not only graven on the hearts of all good men but are distinctly taught by Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

"As M. Du Plan was well known to you prior to his appointment, and as we felt persuaded that you had not acted without due consideration, we followed in your footsteps. How grievous and mortifying will it be to us if we have the misfortune to see you revoke the nomination on such unjust pretexts, and above all after Protestants everywhere are convinced of the marvellous success of his labours!

How can the idea be entertained for a moment? Surely there will be found among you a sufficient number of enlightened Pastors, Students and Elders to maintain the right and unanimously complete what you have so nobly begun. Will you expose yourselves or the Synodal body to a disgrace which can but be fatal to the Church?"

After having reminded them that such conduct would alone irritate God and make him abandon them to their unhappy fate, Roger added:—

"I know not from whence come these base calumnies, nor who they are that conceive the design of frustrating the bright hopes we have justly formed of this deputation, from the fruits it has already brought forth; but we conjure you for the sake of the Lord Jesus, as well by the interest you ought to feel in the advancement of the kingdom of God and the reawakening of our beloved Churches, without speaking of the regard you ought to have for the honor of our Synodal body, to confirm M. Du Plan in his mission, and to fulfil the engagements you have made to him; and, while recognising that he is a man truly pious and sincere, imbued with earnest love, and having a wise and understanding heart, we beseech you to make his calumniators and the opponents of his deputation aware of the magnitude of their crime, and how greatly their proceedings prejudice the much needed repose of our afflicted Churches."

The Pastor then spoke of the pecuniary difficulties of the Churches of Dauphiny. The government had called up the arrears of taxes for twenty-three years, and threatened to confiscate the possessions of those who had married in the Desert or fled to other lands. Nevertheless the Churches had not refused to contribute to the expenses of the Deputy.

"Notwithstanding this great drawback," added Roger, "I venture to affirm that we shall give to the extent of our humble resources; and further, that if God by His grace permits us to witness an increase in the number of our brethren, we shall augment our contributions in a like degree and so afford encouragement to *Sieur Du Plan*; for we must not forget that he can spend only according to his means."

He then concluded with these elevated thoughts:

"He simply asks us to judge his conduct to the best of our ability. Why then should we continue to disregard our own honor and our own interests? No, my dear brethren, my faith in the Lord is such, that I am confident the pious example you give daily in your efforts to revive religion in our Churches will produce a spirit of emulation in this good work; and that, regardless of the suggestions of certain evil disposed persons, you will remain firm in your sentiments and matured convictions, to the end that God in His mercy aiding our united feeble endeavours may grant us the satisfaction of meriting the spontaneous approval of all who love the Lord Jesus. ¹"

Benjamin Du Plan, then, had found in Roger a worthy successor to *Antoine Court*, and an eloquent defender of his cause. *Cortiez* and his followers again failed in their efforts to depose the Deputy, and he was maintained in his office.

The following were the new instructions given to the Deputy-General of the Churches of *Languedoc*, the *Cevennes*, *Vivaraïs*, and *Dauphiny*.

"1st. That the said Deputy-General shall carefully and religiously refrain from doing, saying, writing or countenancing anything in opposition to the Sovereign

1. *Jacques Roger*, by *Daniel Benoit*, p. 101.

Powers, and specially in opposition to our King or legitimate government ; that he shall abstain from ~~gets~~ likely to cause trouble in the Church, and in or between the States ; contenting himself with simply representing, or causing to be represented—always in a humble and submissive manner—the justice and equity of our requirements ; and obtaining, or causing to be obtained for us, the full and free exercise of our religion, according to the Word of God and the dictates of our consciences. To these ends the said Deputy must alone address himself to our Sovereign, or to friendly and allied Powers ; and if he shall do, speak, write or countenance anything to the contrary he shall thereupon be censured, denounced, and degraded from his office for doing, speaking, writing, and countenancing that which is opposed to the intention and aim of the Deputation ; for he thereby incurs the wrath of God, and the penalties threatened by our Churches and Synods the same being empowered to take ecclesiastical proceedings against him.

“ 2nd. Amongst the representations he will make to the Protestant Powers, friendly to, and allied with the State, as to our condition, he shall not fail to apprise them of our urgent need of gifts and free will offerings for the maintenance of the ministry either by the formation of a fund for the instruction of those who are willing to devote themselves to the ministry, or at least for the support of the Pastors already in charge, until it shall please God to bring about for us a happier state of affairs.

“ 3rd. He shall sustain the interests of the Churches whose Deputy he is, with all the zeal of which he is capable, both by speaking and writing.

“ 4th. He shall take every opportunity of vigorously defending the sacred assemblies which meet under the Cross for Divine service against the unjust attacks of those who question their utility, necessity and importance.

“ 5th. He shall scrupulously abstain from all intercourse, public or private, with those who in these last times call themselves the Inspired and Prophets, not alone because the

glory of God and the edification of the Church demand it, but because of the promise he himself has given us by letter, which letter is preserved among the archives of our Churches.

"6th. He shall undertake nothing, how unimportant soever, either in his negotiations, his journeys, or his distribution of the offerings he may receive on behalf, especially of the preachers, or generally of the Churches or even for his own benefit, without first consulting and obtaining the advice and consent of certain persons selected for the purpose by the Synodal Assemblies.

"7th. Our Churches being unable at present to furnish him with means for his support, he shall maintain himself from his own private resources, until such times as there shall be found other resources from which to pay him a salary befitting his office, which salary shall be regulated by persons appointed for the purpose or by a Synodal Assembly.

"8th. That his life and conduct shall be in conformity with the rules established in this behalf by our Churches, that he shall submit to our censure, and promise never to deviate from our creed and doctrines.

"Lastly, that he shall render an exact account of all money bestowed and all work performed for the benefit of our Churches.

"Given at our National Synod, held in Dauphiny this eleventh day of October, One thousand seven hundred and twenty seven

"ROGER, Pastor and Moderator;

DURAND, Pastor, Deputy for Vivarais, joint Moderator;

BOYER, Preacher, Deputy General of the Churches of Upper and Lower Languedoc, the Cevennes and Guienne, Secretary;

FAURIEL, Preacher, Deputy of the Churches of Vivarais, joint Secretary."¹

1. Copied word for word from the original document in the possession of our Churches, by me, Vouland, Pastor of Dauphiny.

On receipt of these resolutions, Benjamin Du Plan proceeded to address the Synod with observations on certain points regarded by him as personal to himself, and at the same time offered his brethren some salutary advice.

“To the Pastors, Preachers, and Elders, of the Reformed Churches of France, who groan beneath the Cross.

“Messieurs, my very dear and honored brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The grace, peace, and love of God be with you.

“It is some time since I have had an opportunity of addressing the Assembly of our Churches, to render them an account of my doings, and afford them evidences of my affection. I waited for this object until I had returned from a journey made in their interest, and now that I am undisturbed, it is expedient that I should justify myself, as far as I am able, to them who have honored me with the office of their Deputy. I know not by what sort of fatality, a spirit of jealousy, distrust and division, has crept in among us. In vain have I sent proofs of the purity of my faith and good conduct in matters relating to religion—the subject on which I am attacked. The testimony of a few private individuals of little religious knowledge has prevailed over that of a great number of wise, pious and disinterested pastors, under whose observation I live and with whom I am in constant intercourse. True, I hold certain views peculiar to myself, but even they who do not share in them have agreed that they are not dangerous, for I submit everything to the test of reason and the Word of God. All my attempts to justify myself have, however, counted for nothing. I am continually opposed; some, even, have gone so far as to attempt to deprive me of my office, under divers pretexts, the principal being that there is danger of my personal opinions being attributed to the whole body, thereby bringing it into contempt and causing it to be suspected of fanaticism;

others affirm that the Churches are not in a position to support a Deputy, while others again say that a Deputy is of no use. I have endeavoured to remove all these hindrances to the success of my mission and to the services I desire to render to my country :—

“ Firstly, by sending proofs of my faith and good conduct, which I could not have done had my sentiments been dangerous.

“ Secondly, by writing a letter, which has been placed amongst the records of our Churches, wherein I promise, for the sake of peace, no more to be seen in any assembly of the Inspired and even to avoid all intercourse with them, as far as charity will permit, during my period of office.

“ Further, I promise not to ask for any help from the Churches, for services past or future, leaving experience to decide whether or not a Deputy is of use to them.

“ If hitherto there has been less result from my labours than I could have wished, this is attributable to the mischances by which the greater part of the help intended for us has fallen into the hands of our enemies. I may also add that the want of money has prevented me from visiting countries where riches abound. I might have been successful, or I might not—God knows ! but it is nevertheless probable that for every pistole I have collected in Switzerland, I might have collected ten, twenty or thirty in Germany, Holland, and England.

“ Having now completed the justification of my past conduct, I will reply to the instructions forwarded to me by the Synod of Dauphiny, at which the deputies from Languedoc have assisted. I find some of these instructions unintelligible and others impracticable, and I have consequently referred them to certain wise and pious persons who charitably interest themselves in the well being and edification of our Churches, for explanation and emendation, and I conscientiously promise both them and you on the faith of a Christian, to follow the instructions truly and faithfully, so soon as they shall have been put into a fair and reasonable shape. In

order to avoid all imputations of a desire to profit personally by the duty to which I have been appointed, I have been very careful hitherto, and will be still more careful in the future, not to touch a penny of the money contributed, ; I shall simply content myself with soliciting charity for others, and naming persons of well known honesty and respectability to receive and put all contributions to their proper use. I will render an account of all my plans and actions touching the deputation to these persons, and either they or I will tell you everything it is right you should know. If this does not satisfy you, I shall think you are uncharitable and your demands unreasonable.

"I desire to point out that as you are under the Cross, and living in the midst of your enemies, as by a miracle, you ought to display in all things a spirit of humility, gentleness and charity which alone will secure you the divine protection. If you assume a haughty, domineering and obstinate spirit you will speedily be ruined. God will withdraw His protection from you, and you will probably be overwhelmed in less than a year by violent persecutions, the outbreak of which has hitherto been prevented by the preoccupation of the Court of France with matters of grave moment and the threatened European war. Peace is on the eve of being concluded, and M. le Cardinal De Fleury, a devotee of Rome, and an intimate friend of the Jesuits, is probably preparing plans for the extinction of the Protestant religion in France, after having completely crushed the turbulent Jansenists who have more influence in the Kingdom and are more tolerated than the Protestants. It is not necessary to be a prophet or to be inspired in order to foresee these things; past and present experience of the action of the government makes all those who have eyes, to tremble. If you do not believe me ask intelligent persons who understand matters and see what they will say. It is no pleasure to be a bearer of evil tidings. But if both you and I do not improve and give better attention to obey the commandments of God—if charity does not animate us more, we are deceiving ourselves

It appears to me as if God's judgments were being poured out upon us on all sides. In the name of God, my dear and honored brethren, let us together humble ourselves; united in Spirit though separated in body let us endeavour to appease His anger, let us not seek our own conversion alone, but that of our enemies also, that all may possess the liberty of serving Him according to His Word. God is waiting to display His justice or His mercy according to the good or bad use we make of His protection and His blessings; let us no longer abuse His goodness, but turn to Him with all our heart, then instead of withholding His countenance, He will renew His grace and will open the eyes of our enemies to their error and wickedness. Instead of persecuting us, they will stir us up to serve God in spirit and in truth; no more shall be heard the cry 'Away, Away Crucify!' but Hosannahs shall everywhere resound. 'Blessed be He who cometh in the name of the Lord! Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will to men!'

"This new year, on which we have just entered, affords me an opportunity, Messieurs and dear brethren, of renewing my earnest and sincere prayers on your behalf. May God by His grace give you the clearest and most striking evidences of His protection. May God grant to you the inestimable happiness of serving Him in holiness and righteousness, without fear of your enemies; and may He, after you have completed a long and prosperous spiritual and temporal career in this world, vouchsafe to you everlasting joy in heaven.

"I commend myself to your friendship and prayers, and beg leave to assure you that no one is, with more esteem and affection, Messieurs, my dearly beloved brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ, Your very humble and obedient servant.

"Caila DU PLAN."

"Geneva, the 2nd of January, 1728.

"I would ask Messieurs the Pastors to read this letter in the Synod and to inform the Chiefs of its contents."

Agreeably with Du Plan's request, this beautiful letter was read to the Provincial Synod held on the 30th of April 1728, and the following official document was sent to him in reply.

"We, Pastors and friends, Delegates of the Reformed Churches of Dauphiny assembled in Provincial Synod, affirm by these presents that M. Benjamin Du Plan, Nobleman, of the town and district of Alais in Languedoc, has, after being nominated by the Provincial Synods of Languedoc and Vivarais, in like manner been nominated by the Pastors and Elders, Delegates of our Churches, assembled with the Delegates of the Synods of Languedoc, the Cevennes, and Vivarais, in National Synod, on the 19th of August 1725, and that the nomination has been confirmed by the National Synods held in Vivarais on the 29th of August and in the Cevennes on the 13th of September of the same year, the said three Synods being the National Synods of the year 1725, whereat all the Churches of this kingdom have agreed to submit to a common rule and to act together by a common treaty. INASMUCH as M. Du Plan has, by article 21, been nominated, and his nomination since confirmed by all our National and Provincial Synods, the said M. Du Plan being thereby appointed to the office of Deputy General of the Reformed Churches of Languedoc, the Cevennes, Vivarais and Dauphiny, to pray and beseech the Protestant Powers, in friendly alliance with our Sovereign Monarch, to be pleased to represent to our good and gracious King the expediency of granting us the free exercise of our Holy Religion in order that we may serve God according to the teachings of the Gospel and the dictates of our consciences, and to implore the aid of their liberality and benevolence in order that the Holy Ministry may be maintained in our midst, that the Pastors who at present serve us may have the means of subsistence, and that those young men who have the courage to devote themselves to the service of our

persecuted Churches may have the means wherewith to prosecute their studies in conformity with the instructions that our last National Synod of the 11th of October 1727, Art. 7, has sent to M. Du Plan, and in which form he has accepted and signed them, Now we declare that we have perceived with joy and thankfulness that since the first accession to office of M. Du Plan, God has blessed our new-born Churches in a marvellous manner, and that humanly speaking, this blessing from heaven must be regarded as a result of the important succour, the books, the pious and honored friends, and the prayers, that M. Du Plan has secured for us, by his own unceasing toil. With sentiments of the most profound respect we take the liberty of very humbly beseeching and supplicating the Sovereign Courts and their Ecclesiastical Councils to which M. Du Plan, shall address himself in our name and on behalf of our Churches, to be graciously pleased to receive him in his quality of Deputy General of our Churches as well as to place reliance on all that he shall testify on our behalf, we being fully satisfied from the most conclusive indications and proofs that he fulfils the duties of his office with a truly Christian devotion; and we believe that if M. Du Plan can continue to discharge the functions of Deputy, with the same blessing of God and the same good will of men devoted like himself to the well being of our Churches, we shall have the great consolation of witnessing a revival in the Protestant Churches of the kingdom similar to that which took place prior to the persecution, and which was regarded as a miracle of Providence. While continuing our prayers to God for the maintenance and preservation of the Protestant Powers in happiness and prosperity and for the tranquillity of their subjects, while praying also for our King and his whole realm, as well as for the repose and extension of the Churches, which by the mercy of God at present enjoy their liberty, for the deliverance of those which are under oppression, for the preservation in health and strength of our worthy and zealous Deputy, and for the

blessing of God on all his labours, we have unanimously judged it proper at this our Synod to send these present attestations, signed by our Pastors and sealed with the seal of our Churches, to M. Du Plan for the purpose of giving authority to his deputation and serving as his credentials wheresoever they may be required.

"Given at our Synodal Assembly this thirtieth day of April, One thousand seven hundred and twenty eight.

"JACQUES ROGER, Pastor and Moderator.

JEAN VILLEVAIRE, Pastor.

PAUL FAURE, Pastor.

JACQUES BADON, Pastor and Secretary." ¹

Whilst these spirited discussions about Du Plan were going on in France, the Deputy of the Synods himself was continuing his work of devotion to the Churches. Accompanied by the young student Bétrine he visited the principal towns in Switzerland, and in one year, 1728, he collected 1,900 *livres* at Berne, 776 at Schaffhausen, 880 at Zurich, and 500 at Bâle. In the following year he sent to France 200 *livres*, a sum which was devoted to the payment of the Pastors.

At Berne he obtained from their Excellencies the Magistrates a life annuity for a victim of the persecution, a refugee named Martel. A few friends in the Church at Berne offered to maintain at their own expense two additional students in the College at Lausanne, on the strict condition that the proceeding should be kept secret. Their Excellencies

1. Copied from the original document.

would never have permitted support to have been publicly given (and in a way that might have attracted the notice of France) to a seminary for the education of young men to whom access to allied countries had been forbidden, and who could not even recross the frontier without exposing themselves to the rigours of the Edicts.

The number of the students was thus raised to three and progressively increased year by year until in 1730 it had risen to seven. The students whose names were Roux, Jacques Boyer, Foriel, Jean Combes, Paul Faure, Barthélemy Claris, and Maroger, came from Dauphiny, Languedoc, and the Cevennes.

Benjamin Du Plan felt the liveliest interest in this rising college. He took delight in visiting the young men at Lausanne, in stimulating their faith and in speaking with them about their native country; he specially interested himself in their studies and regretted that these could not be prolonged beyond the space of one year.

"Bétrine, "he wrote to Court", makes such progress with his studies, that everyone considers an act of injustice will be done to the Churches as well as to himself if his stay be not prolonged for several months."

(15th of August 1726.)

"It is necessary," Du Plan again wrote, "that Bétrine should study longer if he be considered worthy to receive the imposition of hands. Several of our most prudent friends advise that he should receive his ordination in this

country in order to shut the mouths of our calumniators, and to satisfy the scruples of certain weak-minded and ignorant persons to whom we are bound to defer. Our preachers, as you are aware, have the reputation of being idle, illiterate tatlers without profession or vocation, and for this reason it is expedient to have amongst us some who have received their ordination in a foreign Church."

1726.

Now that the college was becoming of importance and the sum accumulated by the Deputy of the Churches considerable, a committee was formed at Geneva, composed of benefactors to the work. Its duties consisted not alone in receiving and distributing the money collected, but also in superintending the education of the young men at Lausanne. Antoine Court and Cortiez would have wished the Deputy to render them an exact account of his mission and to have made them acquainted with the origin, extent and destination of the amount received. This Du Plan resolutely refused to do. He tells us himself of the formation of the Committee, in a letter dated the 19th of May, 1729.

"Our benefactors have selected certain persons beyond all suspicion of imprudence or dishonesty, who out of charity have been induced to accept the task of receiving and distributing the gifts. To me is reserved the simple duty of asking and not that of receiving, distributing or rendering an account. All I am able to tell you on this point is that our receipts are not very large, and that as we receive so we give either for the maintenance of the students, for the comfort of the galley slaves, prisoners, and afflicted, or for the purchase of the books you receive from time to time.

As to the origin of our resources, it is neither right, possible nor judicious to name our benefactors or render an account to you of their gifts. The work being one of charity it is sufficient if they from whom the money is received are satisfied as to its amount and disposal. If I collected or held the money I should be obliged to render an account to those who have appointed me, or if they wished it, to our benefactors; but thank God I am relieved from this embarrassment; nevertheless as a friend I will give you all the information in my power."

Roux and Boyer, two students of the college at Lausanne, having expressed a wish to be ordained at Zurich, before returning to France, Antoine Court and Cortiez opposed the idea on the score of discipline. They were more than ever annoyed on hearing that Benjamin Du Plan had not discouraged the young men in their project, and they thereupon commenced a spirited correspondence into which Cortiez infused all his characteristic passion and spite. They nevertheless submitted to the judicious observations of the Deputy, who in justification of the young men had only to remind Cortiez that he had himself adopted the same course.¹

"I now come," Du Plan wrote to them, "to the second point, which refers to the installation of M. Roux and M. Boyer, and upon which both of you specially display your eloquence in attacking and blaming me for my conduct. Were you not my friends, I should resent your smart and stinging style; but knowing the kindness of your hearts and your good will towards me, I will content myself by giving

¹ See Edmond Hugues, on this subject, Vol. II, p. 49.

my explanations without using language which might give offence. In the first place I have never seen amongst our laws any rule opposed to ordination in a foreign country. I have received no notice from any Synod on the subject, and all I know is that the majority of the Churches of Lower Languedoc and the Cevennes have demanded the instant return of M. Roux, to which demand I have added my own solicitations both by writing and by word of mouth, notwithstanding that the directors of his studies consider it desirable that his stay should be prolonged in order that his journey may not have been made altogether in vain. With regard to his installation, I am not unmindful that several of our friends wish that it should take place in the country they serve, while others have thought that it should take place here. No one contests your right to impose hands on our Pastors ; the act has been both performed and sanctioned, besides which it is no doubt very advantageous ; but there is likewise no question that the reception of some of our students by our brethren abroad is of considerable use. It evinces the union and intercourse which exist between our Churches and Pastors, and the Churches and Pastors of our communion ; it edifies, consoles, and rejoices many good people, whether they are acquainted with our condition or not. It in a manner shuts the mouths of gainsayers who profess to follow our religion, and who, to justify their cowardly and wicked conduct, treat our assemblies and them who preach in the desert with the greatest contempt, saying that the preachers are ignorant, that they have received no call to the ministry, and that they are not recognised by persons of any intelligence or position.

"I have no wish unduly to praise either the Academies where our students are taught or the Pastors who instruct them, yet these Pastors are at least as capable of ascertaining the ability and worth of our students as our brethren ; besides that it is customary to ordain them in the place where they have studied. Neither do I wish to speak at any length of the warm affection entertained by the Academies

and the Pastors for the persons received and instructed, or of the good which is likely to result in the end, not alone to the members themselves, but also to the body of which they are members. I proceed to justify my conduct touching the reception of M. Roux and M. Boyer. You accuse me of having sanctioned their doings. I believe I could have done so without prejudice to my office, as I am ignorant of any article in our creed on the subject, and as I had no order from any Synod to the contrary. Being, however, aware that I had many personal and good friends who earnestly wished that the reception of M. Roux and M. Boyer should take place in our Churches, I have done all in my power to prevent the reception taking place here. I even believed that I had succeeded, when suddenly they declared their determination of leaving for Zurich. I had no further right or ability to oppose them, and perceiving that the measure might occasion disputes and troubles, I was anxious to remain neutral, in order to be enabled to act as mediator in case of need. I accompanied them as far as Berne, having business there on behalf of our Churches, but I purposely avoided going to Zurich, that I might be free to act afterwards as prudence and charity might suggest. It should be borne in mind that when Messieurs Roux and Boyer had decided to be ordained in this country, and the brethren at Zurich had thought proper to receive them, I openly declared, by way of precaution, that they were not acting by my advice or counsel. At the same time I judged it prudent to join them on their return in the neighbourhood of Berne, to congratulate them, and to offer my views touching their conduct towards you, as well as to implore upon them the blessing of the Lord. Could I do less for men whom I have known so long, who confided in me, and who were about to devote themselves to the service of those Churches which I myself serve, and on whose behalf I am willing, through the grace of God, to sacrifice everything I hold most precious in the world? Take heed, my dear friends, that under the pretext of maintaining a discipline hitherto unknown amongst us,

and which, to be useful and acceptable to all, ought to have just and reasonable foundations; take heed you do not trouble the peace and endanger the union absolutely essential to our existence. To cry out, to become excited and angry about trifles, and to treat them as grave and essential, is to display want of judgment and narrowness of mind. The dogmas and the morals of our religion ought never to vary; not so with discipline. As this is altogether human it may be faulty and require amendment; it may be good under certain circumstances and bad under others, and require to be adapted to times, places, and persons. We are under the Cross and have, properly speaking, only the law as given in the Gospel to guide us in our dealings with one another; all else is arbitrary; we can submit to it or reject it at pleasure without incurring judgments either human or divine (I speak of the Church). Should Messieurs Roux and Boyer not recognise or accept the rule forbidding their reception in this country, they may disregard all commands and censures and carry on their ministry elsewhere. I fear if they are pushed to it they may even form parties, and occasion more trouble than Vesson or Mazelet have ever done. If such should be the case, would they alone be to blame? would not those who constrained them to this course have much to reproach themselves with? I wish with all my heart (foreseeing the fatal effects of discord) that these young men would submit to any censure they have merited and which it may be judged expedient to administer. But beware of employing a remedy worse than the disease. It is well to ascertain first whether any disease exists; secondly, whether the disease requires strong medicine; and lastly, whether the disposition of the patient is not such that he would take offence and throw the offered medicine in the face of him who should administer it. If you profess to be gentler, wiser, and more charitable than our brethren, you should display these qualities in your conduct. People here think that of the two parties you are most interested in this affair, because, the students having already been ordained in this country, it

might be said by ignorant or evil-minded persons that the vocation of the pastors who ordained them was more valid than yours. But you can, and should without difficulty, put yourselves beyond such a suspicion. The best vocation of all is the Divine unction, the approbation of your flock, and the fruit of your ministry; without these things all else is nearly, if not altogether worthless.

"It is well you should know that people here think that a contemptible spirit of pride and domination is creeping in amongst those who direct the affairs of our Churches. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, let us beware of its flattery; the strongest and worst passions generally hide themselves under a plausible exterior, and it frequently happens that they who have the most brilliant talents and perform the noblest acts most easily fall victims to pride. The apostles were not free from vain glory, and God judged it right to give to St. Paul a thorn in the flesh to preserve him against pride. You will not fail to discover your thorn if you look for it; are you not, so to speak, but as victims ready at any moment to be sacrificed by the devotees of superstition to the Lord of Glory?—victims who must be sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb without blemish, and animated by His spirit to be made acceptable to the God of Love. I speak in the spirit of confidence and sincerity, as to brethren and friends, when I say that if you are desirous of maintaining peace you will succeed, for I know scarcely a person who could or would bring trouble upon Messieurs Roux and Boyer. If you take their part as much as reason and a desire for peace requires of you, God will applaud your conduct, and your friends here, on hearing of your harmony, will not be scandalized or alienated, but on the contrary will renew their esteem, their affection and their good will."

(Berne, 19th of May 1729.)

The observations of Du Plan, supported by those of Professors Turretin and Maurice of Geneva,

and Vial de Beaumont formerly Pastor of Grenoble, appeased the conflict. Court and Cortiez consented to give the right hand of fellowship to their young brethren as soon as they had obtained the approval of their colleagues of Dauphiny and Vivarais—Roger and Durand. Roger who had been one of the firmest opponents no longer resisted, and a Conference granted the approbation demanded.

CHAPTER XVI.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY'S PERSECUTIONS.—COURT QUILTS.

FRANCE AGAINST THE WISHES OF DU PLAN.

1726-1729

The Declaration of 1724, cruel as it was, did not appreciably aggravate the situation of the Reformed Church. It seemed as if the attention of the Court, occupied by political cares and the marriage of Louis XV, had been diverted from religious questions.

But in 1726 all was changed. The Bishop De Fréjus, now Cardinal De Fleury, had already designated the Duke De Bourbon to succeed to office on the first favorable opportunity, and that opportunity now presenting itself the Duke was installed and the persecution recommenced.

Du Plan, who through his friends in Switzerland was well informed as to all that passed in Paris, had frequently forewarned Antoine Court. His representations were however disregarded, but though

treated as a visionary, he was unhappily under no misapprehension. Scarcely had De Fleury acceded to power when he was overwhelmed with demands, memorials, and petitions from the Clergy against Protestantism, and soon afterwards there appeared a fresh decree from Louis XV ordering rigorous measures to be taken against all who attended, or were suspected of attending, the assemblies. The men so convicted were condemned to the galleys in perpetuity, and the women to life-long imprisonment.

De Fleury's first victim was a young Pastor of the Desert of the name of Alexandre Roussel. He was born about the year 1701, at Uzes, and belonged to a respectable family. Rocked in his cradle to the rude music of battle, he had grown up amid the perils of the terrible Camisard wars; his pious mother had trained him in the fear of God, and the young man felt within himself an early call to the ministry, which the sight of Baviile's numerous gibbets had no power to dispel from his breast. He was twenty-five years of age when Antoine Court, struck by his piety, imposed hands upon him. For two years the young minister wandered about preaching in the Cevennes. On the 10th of October, 1728, a traitor having betrayed his place of concealment, he was arrested in the neighbourhood of Aulas and imprisoned in the Citadel of Montpellier. His mother on hearing of her son's arrest threw herself at the feet of the Duke d'Uzes whom she had nursed in infancy. The Duke endeavoured to save the young man and counselled him to feign madness,

"Monseigneur", replied Roussel, "I am very much obliged to you for your good intentions towards me, but permit me to say to your Grace that I have never possessed greater strength of mind than at the present moment, and that my conscience does not allow me to counterfeit insanity." He was condemned to be hung, and the execution speedily followed the sentence. As the sad moment approached, the young martyr walked to his doom with calmness and serenity. He appeared on the *Place du Pérou*, singing the fifty-first psalm with head uncovered, feet bare and a rope round his neck. On arriving at the gibbet he knelt down and prayed, after which he ascended the ladder with much courage and firmness, and died like Stephen in a transport, seeing the heavens opened above him.

Antoine Court visited the martyr's mother to console her; weeping bitterly she replied to him, "If my son had displayed any weakness I should have been inconsolable; but since he has died steadfast and firm in the faith, all my grief is turned into unceasing thankfulness and praise to my God for His almighty consolation."

Benjamin Du Plan was deeply affected by this incident, and felt himself called upon to write to his brethren, urging steadfastness in presence of the serious evils by which they were threatened.

"I hope, my dear friend, "he wrote to Court," that the saintly death of our dear brother M. Roussel, instead of disquieting our brethren who preach under the Cross, will only cause them to implore God's help with greater fervency

and exhort their hearers to discharge their duty with more zeal, since it is by the help of God and by a Christian deportment alone that we can outlive and triumph over the fury of our enemies. We know by sad experience that the great Babylon is not yet surfeited with our blood, and can we doubt that the Court, ruled by a Cardinal devoted to the Jesuits and to Rome, is meditating projects for the utter extinction of Protestantism in France? Therefore, my dear brother, it is for you, as one of the chiefs whom God in His infinite compassion has raised up for the establishment of the true Gospel in France, to animate the others, seek out the flock with diligence, and encourage your colleagues, the elders, and the Churches to sustain with courage the assaults that Satan, the world and the agents of Anti-Christ are ready to make. You must be deeply conscious that it is due alone to the providence of God and His miraculous help that the lamp of the Holy Word has been rekindled in our Provinces, and that you have so often been rescued from the toils of your enemies. Our preservation for the future depends on the continuance of this help, for without it we could not even exist, conscious as we are of our weakness, and the power and wrath of our foes, who spare no effort to compass our ruin. I have written in this strain more than once both to you and to the Churches, but my letters have not received the attention they deserved, because many believe that my statements are founded on the so-called inspirations of some prophetess. No extraordinary inspirations are necessary in order to perceive the imminent danger that threatens us; we have only to use our eyes to see that we do but resemble a flock of lambs surrounded by packs of ravening wolves, and that unless the Shepherd who has laid down His life for His sheep restrains their rage we shall be quickly torn in pieces and devoured. The deceitful calm we have for some time enjoyed ought not to make us unmindful of what happened to our fathers. They flattered themselves that the trial would never overtake them and under this illusion they had lulled themselves to sleep when

the storm burst forth with such fury that the greater number succumbed to persecution, abjuring our Holy Religion in a cowardly and shameful manner. I know not what would happen in our times if the enemy employed the same means to compel us to abandon our profession of the truth. Nothing less than righteousness of life, purity of morals, ardent zeal for the glory of God, and earnest love for our neighbour, can prevent the occurrence of multitudes of apostacies. In the name of God, my dear friend, brother, and companion in labour, wait not till the Philistines be upon you! Let not flesh and sense, like another Delilah the traitress, deprive us of the Divine unction which alone can cause us to triumph over our enemies. Awake, awake, put on the whole armour of God, and fight manfully in the battle which seems to be approaching! When the destruction of our forefathers was contemplated by their enemies, peace in Europe was the fatal way which led to that dire catastrophe. The seizure of some papers in the possession of M. Roussel, and of others in Dauphiny, have, according to M. Roger, been the means of revealing our affairs; the minister of a Cardinal who has published so very startling a decree could have brought about our ruin, if Providence had not temporarily suspended the operation of the decree, to the end that we might have time to repent and make our peace with God, by whom alone we and our Churches have existence in the midst of dangers that threaten on all sides.

" You will hear with regret and sorrow that some small private help from truly pious sources has been intercepted; it shows us that we ought not to rely on the Protestant Powers, unless God inspires them with new zeal; they are broken reeds which will only pierce the hand that leans on them. The Protestant Princes are mostly cold-hearted, given over to their own pursuits and occupied by their temporal interests. Thus there is more need for us to ask God to help them than to ask them to help us; let us turn our aspirations heavenward, and endeavour to appease God's anger by repenting and humbling ourselves before Him. If we take example

by Moses on the hill when Joshua fought on the plain, if we wrestle with the Lord, like Jacob with the Angel, and refuse to let Him go except He bless us, it is certain that He will come to our help; God will give us great fortitude to withstand persecution even should it increase, and we may consider ourselves happy in being permitted to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ our Divine Master. Perhaps God may convert our enemies and glorify the truth in upholding it without employing instruments; or perhaps if our enemies harden their hearts like Pharaoh, God may visit with His most fearful plagues that Egypt which holds captive the new Israel: be it our's only to do our duty, trusting implicitly to the over-ruling care of Providence!

"As this year will soon give place to another, I would desire to anticipate the good wishes it is customary to offer on the first day of a new year. May God commemorate this new epoch by the most striking proofs of His love for the Church; may He sustain and bless all whom He has appointed for its instruction, consolation, help and protection; may He support and animate by His Holy Spirit all who suffer for His name's sake; may He, my dear friend, give you grace to carry out your work successfully, and after you have, like St. Paul, fought the good fight and kept the faith, may you inherit the crown of righteousness that Jesus Christ has purchased for you with His precious blood. I present my most earnest prayers on behalf of your beloved Rachel and your dear family; embrace and kiss them for me. You may rest assured that it is always a pleasure to me, as well as a duty, to testify the esteem and cordial affection with which I am, Monsieur my dear friend, Your very humble and obedient servant.

"C. B. DU PLAN."

(25th of December 1728.)

Since the execution of Roussel, the preachers, and especially Court, had been closely watched. Court had been betrayed by spies, and search was

made for him, though unsuccessfully, on the night of the 1st of March, 1729, in the house where he was concealed. The price of ten thousand *livres* was put upon his head, and it was only by stratagem and constant vigilance that he succeeded in evading his pursuers. The Protestants appreciated the value and importance of the man who had raised Protestantism from its abasement. They all became anxious, some even counselled him to leave France and wait in a foreign country till the storm had passed. His wish was to remain with his flock, but his enemies discovered his vulnerable point; and on that day, in spite of the remonstrances of his best friends and the firm and unmistakeable wish of the Church, the man who had braved death a thousand times quietly abandoned his sphere of labour, crossed the frontier and quitted France for ever.

The foul measures conceived for obtaining the mastery over this exalted mind have been since revealed to us by one of the persecutors. "If you wish," he wrote to the Intendant, "to exterminate Protestantism forthwith, chase the ministers and students of the sect from the kingdom"—"How?" was the reply. "Shut up in a convent the wives of those who are married and in a citadel the fathers of those who are not, and publish abroad that you will set them at liberty only when husband and son have crossed the border. Experience proves the success of this plan. The minister Court would be still in France if his wife had not been threatened with the convent, and the minister Maroger also if

his wife had not been confined in the convent of Lodève. Courageously adopt this measure and success will be certain. No more Pastors, no more baptisms or marriages in the Desert.¹"

Antoine Court had married in 1722, on his return from Geneva; his wife was a young girl of Uzès whom he had probably met in the course of his missionary rounds—he loved her tenderly. Her name was Etiennette Pagès, but Court and his friends styled her simply Rachel. She had some money, but what was of more value she was possessed of a deep piety. By this marriage Court had two girls, and Du Plan was god-father to the younger, whom he called his *bénonisse*. As far back as 1725, Court had occupied his thoughts in preparing a place of refuge abroad for his wife in case of need.

"I am surprised, "he wrote to Du Plan," that you have not spoken about my Rachel. There is however nothing new respecting her, and I thank God she enjoys perfect tranquillity. Let me know your ideas frequently concerning the dear child; it is necessary to think of the future. Look out at once and read with attention the little note enclosed in my last (moments are precious); it should be preserved, for it inquires as to the way in which a sum of money might be provided abroad—Geneva, for instance—where the child may one day go; meanwhile, however, some money might be sent thither."

(3rd of November 1725.)

1. See The Bulletin, Vol. VII., p. 39. A traitor's letter to the Intendant, furnishing information as to the ministers of the Desert and their families.

Du Plan at once replied, and being aware of Antoine Court's love for his wife, he took the opportunity of preparing him for an early separation, by pointing out the dangers she ran in his company. Du Plan knew the place she occupied in his heart and feared she would soon become to him an idol.

"Assure your Rachel of my respect and friendship, and thank her for her kind remembrance. I beseech her or you to tell me about my god-daughter, not at the same time forgetting her dear little sister. Think over how I can be useful to you in this country ; you may rely, if it please God, upon always finding in me, to the extent of my ability, a zealous and faithful friend, and so far as depends upon me our friendship shall be as the friendship of David and Jonathan.

"There is no brotherhood between Christ and the world; the world must have no place in our souls if we desire Christ to fill them with His Spirit. Let us commune with our own souls, let us dive into the innermost recesses of our hearts to discover if any idol be concealed there ! Let us distrust our own acts, our own thoughts, our own sentiments. Our self love—our Rachel—often hides its divinities under pretexts so plausible that the Labans are deceived ; let us often exclaim with David : Search me and try me, O God, and incline my heart unto Thy testimonies ! If we persevere in examining our hearts, and in praying fervently to God for His Holy Spirit, if we make a good use of the talents we have received from Him, He will without doubt more frequently find a place in our souls ; The Lord will change us into His image by the virtue and efficacy of His Holy Spirit. He will altogether dispel darkness from our understandings, eradicate vice from our hearts, and kindle in us the fire of His love. God will reveal Himself to us as distinctly and clearly as He can, and will reveal Himself to the world ; and this revelation added to His love, a love so profound and pure, will form a sure pledge to us of a blessed future. O eternity,

O blessed eternity, thou hast charms for earnest, faithful and true souls. No suffering, no sorrow, no cross shall have power to deprive us of the peace and joy to be found in the heart of a true Christian. Who is he that cannot exclaim with St. Paul, 'Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword'? on the contrary, 'in all these things I am more than conqueror, through Him that loved me; for I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Let us then strive with all our power to stir up an increased love for God in our souls, abstain from and shun everything that abates or extinguishes it, and fly from the places, or separate ourselves from the persons who hinder our growth in grace! God is jealous of His glory; He asks for our entire heart; if it be His will to permit us to love any other being than Himself, it is also His will that we should love that being infinitely less than Himself, as well for His sake as in obedience to the precepts of His Holy Word. When any creature becomes a stumbling block we must remove it, even if in doing so we are compelled to deprive ourselves of the reasonable and legitimate happiness which, under other and happier circumstances, we might rightly enjoy.

"Though my discourse, my dear friend, concerns all Christians, it is doubtless now addressed to you specially. I confess that I fear greatly for your Rachel and her children. I should for your own sake, as well as for that of the objects of your affection, advise you to take timely measures for putting them in a place of safety. We must not be misled into thinking the present calm will endure; it may be broken by a thousand unforeseen accidents; forewarned of the storm, we shall be the better able to avoid rocks and sandbanks. I admit that the surest means of avoiding shipwreck is to place ourselves under the guidance of the Sovereign

Pilot of the Church ; but as that Pilot has endowed us with reason, we must make as good use of it as we can, and leave the rest to Providence, always praying that God may bless our efforts, over-rule our deliberations, and confirm us in all the aspirations that grace may inspire."

(5th of June 1726.)

After a lapse of two or three years Antoine Court acted on the advice of his friend, and in the month of March, 1729, wrote to him as follows :—

" My Rachel has finally taken flight ; she left yesterday for your city and will arrive, if it please God, at the end of the month. I need hardly ask you to do what you can to procure for her a favorable reception, being firmly persuaded you will refuse her nothing. I simply ask you to bear in mind that she is my Rachel—my Rachel from whom I could not separate myself without sacrificing a tender affection to a stern sense of duty and regard for her safety. Adieu, my dear friend, I commend my Rachel to you."

Du Plan lost no time in announcing to Court Rachel's safe arrival. He soon discovered that his friend had a secret longing to join her, and it was with the view of urging him to remain in France with his flock, decimated by persecution, that he thus wrote to him two months after her arrival in Geneva :—

" I speak with special frankness to my friend M. Court. I do not blame your affection and anxiety for your Rachel, I only fear that you are a little too ardent. You may rest easy on her account, for she is much beloved here, she has everything she needs—more perhaps than you imagine. You may now devote yourself to the glorious career that Provi-

dence has marked out for you, and which, after having begun, you will not for love of the creature abandon to another. I neither advise you to come here nor to remain in France; the question is one too delicate for me to decide. I exhort you only to have regard to the promptings of conscience, the rules of the Gospel, the requirements of our Churches and the necessities of the situation. We should always avoid rashness on the one hand and timidity on the other, and ascertain whether it is the love of God or the love of His creatures which is the ruling motive of our lives and conduct. The love of Mark Antony for Cleopatra lost him the battle of Actium and the Empire of the world. You have enemies to fight, and an Empire to gain, infinitely more glorious and lasting than the Roman Empire in all its splendour—a prize which, if you prefer the creature to the Creator, you may lose for ever. Forget not the sacrifice of Abraham; forget not, above all, the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ and the words that He spoke to His disciples. 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' By a singular Providence, which ought to be a cause of continual praise to the Lord, you have been happy in the company of your Rachel for several years. God has blessed your marriage with some children, and your Rachel is in safety among kind friends of both sexes. What more can you wish as things are? Fight manfully with the enemies of the Lord, and remember, moreover, that the most formidable enemies are as nought if we have overcome those from within."

(May 1729.)

Antoine Court was already suffering keenly from his enforced separation from his wife, and on learning, a few months later—in October—that she was unwell, he hesitated no longer, and, notwithstanding the dangers that threatened the Church, he left for Lausanne where his Rachel was living. The two

friends had thus frequent opportunities of meeting. What long conversations on the subject of religious persecution in their country did they have—how sweet was their intercourse—what blessed memories were awakened between them!

Rachel had presented her husband with another child, and Du Plan thought that after she was restored to health, Court would resume his work among his persecuted brethren; but from certain incidents that transpired Du Plan soon perceived his mistake. On the 7th of February, 1730, he learnt that his friend had received his black gown from France.

"Surprise has been expressed", he wrote to the latter, "that you have sent for your black gown, for it is not becoming in you to appear in ministerial attire unless you wish to abandon the service of the French Church. You are master of your own acts and can do as you think best, but the warm and sincere friendship which exists between us obliges me to tell you that your conduct is not alone likely to give rise to rumours and attract attention, but may be considered dangerous."

(7th of February 1730.)

Days and months slipped away—the Churches surprised at the prolonged absence of their Pastor complained loudly. Du Plan wrote to him again on the occasion of an illness which had occurred to Rachel.

"I pray, Monsieur and dear friend, that God may restore your Rachel to health, but above all that He may dispose events as seems best in his sight. I cannot doubt that this

sickness has been sent to weaken your too great love for each other and to draw you nearer to God. The Creator who knows our hearts employs the most fit and efficacious means to bring us back to Himself, when our affections interfere with the right discharge of our duty.

"I have received a letter from M. Cortiez, in which he urges me not to keep you here. God knows the truth—it will not be difficult to justify myself. I have heretofore besought you to consult God and your own conscience, and I now repeat my entreaties. On the one hand your co-workers are calling you back, and the Churches are asking for you; and on the other a wife and children are detaining you: which cause have you most at heart? I have great fear that if you prefer your wife and children to the Church, God will bereave you of that wife and perhaps those children, in order that you may know that if any earthly object be preferred before Himself it will be taken away, while if the object is ready to be sacrificed it will be preserved. I have heard it said more than once that M. Cortiez wished to quit the service of the Churches of France, but he thought it not right to do so. I leave you to your own reflections on the matter, and ever implore you to consult neither flesh nor blood, or you will do very unwisely."

(1st of June 1730.)

At length, in the month of August, 1730, the Churches, disquieted at the long absence of their old Pastor, an absence that was neither authorized nor explained, demanded his return in a long letter signed by the Pastors and Students of the Province, wherein they reminded him of his responsibility and the need they had of his ministry. Court disregarded everything, his resolution was fixed, he refused to leave Rachel. His conduct irritated the Churches, which, in spite of his earnest entreaties, refused to

remit him the money he had left in France. Du Plan now no longer hesitated frankly to speak his mind:—

“ I feel persuaded, Monsieur and dear friend, of your integrity of purpose and your charity, but with many others I avow that I fear the quenching of your zeal and the cooling of your love, and that, unmindful of the duties of your calling, God will take His Spirit from you and give your crown to another.

“ M. S. writes to me from Zurich expressing fears that your repose in Switzerland is having the same effect upon you as the allurements of Capua had on Hannibal. Significant as is this example, I would rather prefer directing your attention to the examples of Samson, David and Solomon, and how the strength of the first, the piety of the second, and the wisdom of the third, yielded to the influence of women. In vain you may allege that the object of your love is legitimate; nothing is legitimate that leads us to neglect our duty and to prefer the works of the Creator to the Creator Himself. Abraham's love for his son Isaac was as legitimate as is yours for your Rachel, yet if Abraham had refused to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command, he would have rendered himself unworthy of God's love. The point then is to ascertain whether or not God is calling you to return into France for the solace and edification of your brethren in affliction and who are in danger of being overcome. You have never seemed to believe in extraordinary revelations; you scorn those of the present day, doubtless under the idea that they are not required; it is sufficient if you regard as a call from Providence the talents with which God has endowed you, and the opportunities He has afforded for their exercise. Before your marriage, on receipt of a simple letter from M. Cortiez, you left Marseilles and went to preach in Languedoc. Now, probably, neither the invitation of

Churches nor the solicitations of Synods would have a like effect. I do not pretend to say that you ought to return to France, nor do I even counsel this course. God knows what is right; I repeat my first advice in this matter, that you should consult God and your conscience. I admit that I have a fervent desire for the edification of the Churches, and it appears to me, as well as to many others, that your presence amongst them would be of great service; but I feel persuaded that as God loves His Church, He will never abandon it, and that if you should desert it, He will raise up many more faithful. In such an event you would be the only one to be pitied, and were I to shed tears, they would be for the misfortunes of a friend whom I sincerely love. While you ponder these things seriously in your mind, I will pray that God may give you grace to know and do His will without regard either to flesh or blood or any earthly object, be that object the most charming in the world, for the loveliest Rachels are in the sight of God but worms, bags of filthiness, sinks of iniquity, and wretchedness. What blindness! How disgraceful, how criminal, to abandon the cause of God out of regard for a creature of earth! Understand me, my dear friend, I judge you not; I only advise you. You may be deaf to my counsels, you may sleep and perish—it remains none the less our duty to exhort and rouse each other; for I have as great, or even greater need than you have to be exhorted, advised, and awakened, being conscious that the fleshly tabernacle of the Spirit, like Delilah the traitress, flatters and soothes us if we do not continually watch and pray.

(30th of June 1730.)

Notwithstanding these solicitations, Court refused to leave Switzerland and return to France. The Synods, irritated at his conduct, first of all declined to send his property and then withheld his salary. Thereupon Court, who had hitherto

observed an unaccountable silence, complained that violence was being done to his free will and liberty. Du Plan never wearied in recalling him sternly to duty.

"If the Synods were under my control," he wrote to him: "I well know what I should do with your property and the salary you receive in France. I would send you the former and pay you regularly the latter, until your love for the Churches should either revive or altogether perish. All, however, do not think alike. The gentlemen who assist at the Synod are very glad that you are constrained to acknowledge your pecuniary needs, while your salary goes to maintain those who really serve in the vineyard of the Lord; and seeing that the country is impoverished by fines, and that the number of the Pastors is multiplied, they are all the better pleased that you are in receipt of a salary elsewhere, more especially as you do not deign to reply to the letters that have been written to you and to the solicitations of which I have been the medium. It is useless to say that you have not had time, since you have had more than a year to think over the matter, during which period have been held a National Synod and conferences, at either of which you could have made known your wishes; without taking into consideration that M. Cortiez, the deacon appointed to receive official communications to the Assemblies, is always ready to receive your letters.

"You say that while liberty is extolled and compulsion denounced you are placed under restraint. You remind me of a lady who had promised to confer some benefit on our Churches, and who told me, when I put her in mind of her promises, that I worried her, and she died without executing her good intentions. You have similar good intentions; you avow an ardent love for the Churches which desire your presence amongst them and whose well being appears to be dependent on you, and yet you deign neither to notice their

appeals nor to afford the means of consolation. Already fifteen months have elapsed since you left the country. You apparently take a terribly long time to examine into certain subjects; probably ere long we shall have to decide for you. God forbid that I should constrain you to return to France! I have urged you to consult God and your own conscience as to the following of your high calling, at the same time I am in duty bound to obey the orders of the Synods whose Deputy, I am and to inform you as to matters which personally concern you.

"Although you may not need an example to encourage, or to shame you, according as you are true or false to your vocation, Providence may remind you of the two pastors¹ who so assiduously devote themselves to the service of our Churches. You have received greater talents than they, and are of maturer age and more vigorous constitution; the difference between you arises from the fact that the one is less devotedly attached to his Rachel than you are to yours, and that the other is not embarrassed by a wife at all. Your conduct makes us think and say that possibly your Rachel was really the Providence that called you to France when the late M. Pictet wished to detain you. At all events your present long sojourn with her, in spite of the solicitations of the Churches, lends to this suspicion an air of probability.

"I well know that God has called you to the service of our Churches, enabled you to overcome obstacles which opposed themselves to your success, and permitted you to receive the reward of your labours in this world. Many other persons have served longer and suffered more than you have done, and for objects far less important. In saying this I in no way wish to detract from your merit, or from the reward you may receive from God. On the contrary, I wish from my heart that you might be more worthy of the glory which God prepares for those who serve

1. Cortiez and Roux.

“Him faithfully. God calls you, and if you turn a deaf ear to the appeal, all your righteousness and your former services count for nothing, as it is they alone who are faithful to the end who shall be saved. Remember always to consult God and your conscience.

“Whatever may happen, or whatever course you may think fit to adopt, I disclaim all responsibility. I can only place the facts before you, this my position obliges me to do. Consider me, if you will, importunate, indiscreet, look upon me as a cavalier, as a dragon—I shall none the less acquit myself of my duty towards you as I conceive it. I am glad to be able to add that, although I think your presence would be of inestimable value to the Churches, God has an infinity of means by which to instruct and console them, should you refuse to return; and if you go unwillingly or from unworthy motives, you will perish without fruit, unless it please God in an especial manner out of His infinite compassion to take pity on you.”

(December 1730.)

All was in vain, however. Court was lost as a Pastor to the Churches of France. Nevertheless a disposition so active could not long remain idle. Notwithstanding the reproaches of his friends and the Churches, he devoted the remainder of his life and his ample leisure to the service of his brethren. “Overwhelmed by work, often in journeyings, often multiplying counsel and gathering together the refugees, nearly always pen in hand writing apologies or the history of the Churches and seeking protectors for the same, he passed fifteen years in retirement at Lausanne, having no other thought than for his brethren under the Cross, no other aim than the relief of their sufferings.”¹

1. Ed. Hugues, already quoted. Vol. II, p. 11.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRAVELS OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1731-1745..

During a period of four years Du Plan diligently traversed Switzerland as Deputy General of the Churches of France. Although Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Berne and Zurich had received him with a generous good will, his ambition extended further; he desired to carry out the plan of the Synod of 1727, and visit Germany, Holland and England; but want of money impeded his movements. The Synods, it is true, had voted five hundred *livres* for his travelling expenses, but the vote was all, the money had never been forthcoming, and the sacrifices he had made for his brethren had so reduced his resources that they scarcely sufficed for his personal expenses, much less for travelling, notwithstanding the aid he received from his father and sometimes from one of his uncles named Lèches.

A National Synod which assembled on the 27th of September, 1730, sympathizing with him in his forced inaction, renewed his powers and authorized him to deduct all his travelling expenses from the money he collected, so far as the resources would permit, hoping thereby to give to their Deputy a salary proportionate to his services.

The following is the attestation by which the Synod confirmed further the mandate of the Deputy.

"We, Pastors and Preachers of the Churches of France which are under the Cross, to all Protestant Princes and Powers, greeting;

"Being assembled in National Synod in the Vivarais, and after having discussed the measures which should be adopted by our Churches for maintaining the truth and consoling the faithful under their affliction, have taken into our consideration the overwhelming misfortunes of our flock, the incessant persecution of our enemies against those who refuse to conform to their religion, and the ruin and desolation brought upon entire families by the heavy fines exacted from all who fail to send their children to the Roman Catholic schools; finding ourselves devoid of means and deprived of help, we have had recourse to M. Benjamin Du Plan, our Deputy, requesting him to address himself to your Majesties, High Mightinesses, Excellencies, and all others who are aware of the misfortunes of the Church, and who are touched by our sad condition, in order to represent the pitiable and lamentable state of our Churches groaning under the Cross, and humbly implore them to bestow help as well for the solace and encouragement of the pastors as of their desolated flocks.

"Our flocks being ruined by the frequent imposition of exorbitant fines, our books being carried away and burnt—as everyone in the neighbourhood of Nismes and Alais can testify :

"Our pastors having insufficient means wherewith to support themselves, owing to the straightened circumstances of our faithful whose property is seized by the government, we ourselves outlawed, and our ministerial duties in consequence not maintained :

"We very humbly beseech you to grant to us in this time of our sore trial the consolation of your compassion and protection.

"We beseech you also to intercede with our King on our behalf for the withdrawal of the scourge which afflicts us.

"But especially do we entreat the compassionate to

implore a gracious God, the Father of mercies, that He may have pity upon us, that He may set at liberty our prisoners, console our afflicted, re-establish our churches, and turn our present evil plight to good account by inclining to us the hearts of our brethren who are free.

"It is unnecessary here to enumerate the multitude of sufferers now in the kingdom, as you have already been informed thereof, and Monsieur our Deputy can, if required, himself supply this information.

"We may, however, set forth the facts that latterly many who were luke-warm have been aroused, and that even Catholic families have united themselves to our Churches.

"We humbly pray that the Lord may continually preserve among you the light of His Gospel, and always afford you the means of helping the unfortunate.

"In the Desert, in our Synodal Assembly, the twenty-seventh day of September, one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

"Signed: P. DURAND, Pastor and Moderator ;
CORTIEZ, Pastor and joint Moderator ;
JOUL, Deputy of the Churches of Languedoc ;
ROGER, Pastor and Deputy of Dauphiny ;
BETRINE, Preacher and Deputy ;
FAURIEL, alias Lassagne, Pastor and Secretary ;
MAROGER, Preacher and joint Secretary."

The following is the letter of advice written at the same time to Du Plan by the Synod :—

"We, Pastors and Preachers assembled in National Synod in the Vivarais, to our much honored and well-beloved brother, Monsieur Du Plan, our Deputy General.

"Accompanying the considerations indicated in the instructions herewith sent, we renew, Monsieur, the request we have more than once presented touching the carrying out of your mission to the august and gracious Protestant Powers.

" We further add the expression of our hope that you will not any longer delay the prosecution of this business, equally urgent and interesting, inasmuch as it appears to us, Monsieur, that its further postponement would be an act of culpable neglect, in view of the many necessities of our afflicted Churches.

" We have reason to hope that the journey we now ask you to make will obtain for us much needed and timely help; having a sure guarantee of the same in the fruits of previous solicitations to certain of our kind and illustrious friends.

" What satisfaction would it not be, Monsieur, if through the grace of God, the success of your mission were to put a stop to the evils by which we are oppressed, and, which if God does not interfere, will speedily consummate our ruin? What happiness would it not be for our dear brethren under the Cross, if, in addition to the amelioration of their sufferings, you were to obtain through your ever watchful care and faithful interposition the blessed deliverance for which we have so long sighed?

" Our object, Monsieur, in this letter is to solicit you to raise a fund which may serve to relieve our wants, chiefly those of the Churches in connection with the maintenance of their Pastors; and further, that you may endeavour to obtain the intercession of the Protestant Powers with our King on behalf of that liberty which is our sacred and rightful due.

" Finally, Monsieur, permit us through you to beseech our dear and valued friends to examine the instructions we have sent you on this subject, and we shall be under a deep obligation to our friends, should these instructions be found defective, if they will prepare others more suitable to your purpose; to which, should they deem proper, we will append our signatures, if you will have the goodness to forward us the document.

" We fail not to offer our prayers to heaven on behalf of all who interest themselves in us, beseeching the Lord to bestow His richest blessing on your labours and your pious self.

"In our Synodal Assembly, this twenty seventh day of September, One thousand seven hundred and thirty.

"Signed : CORTIEZ, Pastor and Moderator ;

A. JOUI, Deputy ;

ROGER, Pastor and Deputy of Dauphiny ;

BETRINE, Preacher and Deputy ;

FAURIEL, alias Lassagne, Pastor and Secretary ;

MAROGER, Preacher and joint Secretary."

Before leaving Geneva, the Deputy received the following certificate from the Venerable Company of Pastors of that Church :

"We, Pastors of the Church of Geneva, affirm that M. Benjamin Du Plan, Nobleman, of Alais in Languedoc, of a stature somewhat above middle height, hair long, aged about forty years, of the same religion as ourselves, has quitted the Kingdom of France, in order to make an open profession of his faith, and that he has lived nearly seven years amongst us, during which time we have been greatly edified by his pure morality and his zeal for the advancement of the reign of Jesus Christ ; he has carefully attended our religious assemblies, and has celebrated the Lord's supper with us on every occasion that presented itself. For these reasons, and understanding that he is about to travel in Holland, we recommend him to the grace of God and the good will of our brethren.

"Given at Geneva, this 12th of April 1731.

"Signed : VIAL DE BEAUMONT, Pastor ;

TURRETIN, Pastor ;

MAURICE, Pastor ;

L. TRONCHIN, Pastor ;

J. BESSONNET, Pastor ;

DE ROCHE, Pastor ;

DE LA RIVE, Pastor ;

J. SARRASIN, Pastor ;

LEGER, Pastor ;

DENTAND, Pastor."

Last journey in Switzerland, 1731.

Furnished with these attestations, the Deputy made a last round in Switzerland as a prelude to his longer journey, which, though expected to extend only over a year, was not finished until fourteen had elapsed. It was not without encountering strong opposition from his friends that Du Plan set out. "You take great pains", they said to him, "and spend much money, but secure very little result." They were, however, mistaken, for it may be said that Du Plan by means of the help he obtained either for the College at Lausanne, or for the Churches, prevented the extinction of Protestantism in France. Guided only by his zeal and devotion, he started, travelling sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, but always in the most economical manner. He proposed to Antoine Court that he should accompany him :

"If you have any desire for a pilgrimage in Switzerland," he wrote to him, "I offer to share with you what I possess ; you know the extent of my purse and the object I have in view in going, if it please God, to Holland and England. If you have the courage to encounter perils, travel frequently on foot, and put up with meagre fare, you are my man, we will share our troubles and our pleasures."

At Zurich, Du Plan made the acquaintance of M. De Wateville, a wealthy German baron who was deeply affected by all that the Deputy told him of the persecuted Protestants of France. This noble-

man desiring an interview with Antoine Court, Du Plan furnished him with a letter of introduction :—

“Monsieur de Wateville,” he wrote to him, “lives in Germany; his residence is near that of a nobleman—the Count de Zinzendorf—greatly distinguished for his piety. He is favorably disposed towards those who abandon their country for the truth and has made certain proposals, as to which you can confer with M. De Wateville in order to ascertain how they can be adapted to the wants of our refugees.”

(July 1731.)

These proposals had for their object an extension of hospitality to those whom persecution had driven from France.

Du Plan simply passed through Zurich, though he was assured that a longer sojourn in the city might have borne good fruit. He had been apprized of the arrival of the King of Sweden at Cassel, and he hastened to commence the duties of his foreign mission by an interview with that monarch. From Saint-Gall he wrote to Court asking him to obtain from M. le Professeur Polier a letter of recommendation to his Swedish Majesty. Step by step he arrived at Frankfort, and before setting out for Cassel communicated to his friend some impressions of his journey :—

“I thank God that I am able to report myself in good health, though I have suffered at one time from heat and at another from rain, as well as from the fatigues inseparable from travelling. On my way I have encountered persons of different character; some have entertained me with good

cheer, afterwards offering me money, while others have first entertained me badly and fleeced me afterwards. These things are dispensations of Providence to teach us to use the good with moderation and thankfulness and to suffer the evil with patience and resignation.

"I visited all our friends in Switzerland, and have received promises of a continuance of their charity towards our brethren under the Cross; there is good reason to hope that they will carry out their promises in proper time and place, but let us pray that God may ever inspire them with virtuous sentiments and that He may bless them.

"I intend leaving to-morrow for Cassel, where I am led to hope I shall obtain some help. I shall still be in the keeping of God, though in a foreign land and amongst strangers. If I had followed the Rhine, I should soon have reached Holland, by a route sufficiently agreeable, and with persons whose company would have afforded me pleasure; I have not, however, undertaken this journey for pleasure but to procure help for my brethren.

"To speak frankly, I have not much reason to hope that I shall be very successful in Germany, money being scarce and the people by no means favorably disposed. I am told that Holland is a wealthy country, but the large sum recently collected there for the Vaudois scarcely leads me to hope for much aid at present. For this reason I should prefer spending the winter in England even at the risk of my lungs. Should I meet with success in that country many persons will be greatly surprised, for the description I have received of the inhabitants both from English and French sources does not afford me any encouragement; they are depicted as a people excessively hard and miserly, devoted either to their pleasures or to business, and consequently it is neither through my ability nor their charity that I hope to obtain succour for our fellow countrymen, but solely through the grace of God who can dissolve the rocks in water and the flints in oil when it is His pleasure to do so."

(29th of September 1731.)

At length Du Plan arrived at Cassel, where he was presented to the King of Sweden, by whom he was received in a cordial manner and who gave him about eight hundred *livres* on behalf of the Churches. For the reasons assigned to Court he did not prolong his stay in Germany or pass through Holland, but directed his steps at once towards England, arriving in London towards the end of 1731.

First residence in London 1731—1733.

The trials and fatigues of the journey, and the cold and foggy climate of the North soon affected the health of the zealous Deputy, which was already very delicate. Nevertheless he spared no pains, but went about as well as he could, appealing either to his refugee co-religionists or to the Court. Alas! he had not been deceived as to the reception which had been predicted for him, it was everywhere cold and unkind. He wrote as follows to Court about a year after his arrival:—

“I have no good news yet to tell you, but am waiting, always trusting entirely in God lest my hopes should be put to confusion. Faith is at such a low ebb in this country, charity so chilled and the poor so numerous, that unless God operates in a miraculous manner there is every appearance that my efforts will meet with but a poor result.”

(27th of November 1732.)

Some declined to help on the ground that the sufferings of French Protestants were caused by their own mistaken policy, by their persistence in

holding illicit assemblies and in obstinately preferring persecution to exile, while others not rarely dismissed roughly the troublesome applicant without wasting too many words on him. Let us hear Du Plan's own account of his first essay at raising money in England.

"I have visited persons here who are reported to be very wealthy and inspired with zeal for God. I thought they would joyfully embrace the opportunity of helping to publish the glad tidings of the Gospel in our country upon which God has commenced to look with a compassionate eye. After having explained the condition of our Churches and their needs in the most pathetic manner possible, I have been told distinctly and flatly that missionaries were in the habit of consuming nearly all the money they collected. I certainly did not expect so harsh a reception. I know not if I changed countenance, but I felt somewhat irritated and replied firmly that I advocated the interests of the Church from love and not from necessity, that I already had sufficient, thank God, not alone for myself, but to help a neighbour, and that it was perfectly indifferent to me whether I ate my bread in England or in Geneva, where I had long remained without causing inconvenience to anyone. These words completely changed the tone and bearing of my discourteous, unrefined millionaires, and there is one who in order to atone for his fault has given evidences of his charity whenever I have afforded him the opportunity, while I on my side, with a view to justify my professions of generosity and devotion, and to prove my independence, have disbursed a considerable portion of the money sent to me by my relations; there is no present I have received which I have not in one way or another returned two fold, and this has produced a very good result for the cause which I advocate, while at the same time it has gained me a respect which will render me more capable of serving our churches and my friends

also, both in time and place. I say "time and place" because it is necessary to use discretion, otherwise my efforts may be defeated like the husbandman's, who, after he has sown and laboured with diligence, endeavours to reap the harvest before the grain is ripe."

(January 1734.)

Let us, however, add that Du Plan received some encouragement towards the end of his sojourn in London. He himself acquaints us with the fact.

"I do not intend at present to make a long stay in this city. I have canvassed it for fifteen or sixteen months with little result, but God has at length touched the hearts of a few people of importance who have assured me that my journey shall not be without its fruits, I have reason to believe what they say, and have accordingly indicated to them the persons to whom they should transmit their contributions and from whom they will not fail to receive hearty thanks for their good will, while I content myself with praying that God may continue to sustain them in these good intentions. I have however encountered gainsayers who denounce the assemblies and moralize on misfortune, but I hope soon to overcome their objections."

(April 1733.)

At last after twenty months of urgent solicitations and petitions to the Court, God touched the heart of the King of England, in answer to the prayers of Du Plan. Already had the Deputy gained over to his side the Queen and the Chevalier Schaub, the latter even became one of his most devoted friends. The King granted Du Plan an audience, listened graciously to his recital of the misfortunes of the French Protestants, and most generously presented

him with a gift of one thousand pounds, promising, even, to make the subscription a yearly one. The Queen referred him to the Bishop of London for receipt of the Royal bounty.

Although occupied with the general concerns of the Church, Du Plan did not neglect the interests of his friends. He laboured assiduously, though not always with success, to gather literary materials for Antoine Court who at that time was engaged in writing the history of the Protestant Church.

He also sought help for the refugees who had fled from their country and found themselves in London wretched and destitute. One day there arrived a M. Gas, a church elder. Du Plan had known him in the South, where his house had always afforded a welcome to the preachers. His wife had made her escape to Geneva, and he in traversing Savoy had had the misfortune to lose his two horses. He arrived in London "without a coat or shirt to his back, and moneyless." Du Plan received him at his house, and wrote to Geneva begging of his friends there to interest themselves on behalf of the wife of his guest.

"She writes to me from Geneva, where she is a refugee, that she has sold her clothes to buy bread, of which she is often in need, and that her eldest daughter who is with her is sick. They receive three florins a week from M. Vial, but this is not enough to sustain life. Could you receive them at Lausanne for a time until we can arrange to place them at Berne or Zurich? or here, if the husband can get into business? I shall be specially obliged if you will render them all the aid in your power."

(November 1732.)

We draw particular attention to this fact as a proof of the benevolence and generosity with which the Nobleman welcomed the most obscure of the unfortunates.

It was in the midst of this active and useful life that Du Plan suddenly heard of the death of his father, as well as that of his uncle Lèches, neither of whom had ever failed to evince their affection for him, and their interest in his occupation during the entire period of his absence from France.

The death of his father completely frustrated Du Plan's hopes for the future. The fact that he was exiled deprived him of all rights of inheritance. Having foreseen this misfortune he had several times endeavoured to provide against it, and in 1731 had caused his father's marriage to be legalised; the same, owing to the troubles of the times, not having been regularly solemnised. He had hoped that his father would have bequeathed his property to their intimate friend, the Baron of Alais, by whom it could have been transferred later to the rightful heir. But death overtook Seigneur Ribot Du Plan before he had time to carry into execution his good intentions on behalf of his son.

It is touching to witness with what calm Christian resignation the disinherited son bore this heavy trial :—

"God has ordained all these things," he wrote to Court, "in order to detach my affections from this world, and I only ask grace to bow with submission to His will. I am a stranger and sojourner in the land, and desire only what is

necessary, seeing that 'we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.' My principal and almost only object should be to please my Father who lives for ever, and who will apportion to me an inheritance which neither the power nor cunning of my enemies can ever take away from me, trusting that God will not permit me to be so unfortunate as willingly to suffer deprivation of this inheritance through infidelity to His service."

(May 1732.)

Thanks to the kindness of a few of his relatives and friends, specially to M. Fabre and M. Trélis, of Alais, Du Plan saved something from the wreck of his fortune. M. de Lencizole, his cousin who inherited the property, cordially tendered his services which at a later date Du Plan was compelled to accept. Deprived of further aid from his father, the disinherited nobleman gathered together a little capital, four thousand francs, which he deposited with a banker, his excellent friend, M. Gaussen, of Geneva.

He left London after a sojourn in the capital of England of about two years, terminating his residence there more satisfactorily than he had commenced it.

"After having endured many hardships in England and taken great pains without witnessing any result of my labours, God be praised my journey has at length been successful; I am unable to tell you by writing what I hope to tell you by word of mouth."

(November 1733.)

Journey in Holland, 1733-1735.

Du Plan had a perilous passage to the Hague, where he arrived towards the end of October 1733. He was compelled to keep his room for the first three months after he landed, in order to recover from his fatigue as well as to restore his shattered health, the climate of the North having caused him to suffer considerably in his throat and lungs.

As soon as his health permitted him to move about, the Deputy of the Churches put himself into communication with several refugee families, and especially with the Mesdemoiselles De Dangeau, daughters of the Marquis De Dangeau, he to whom Boileau dedicated his famous satire on the Nobility. His efforts in the Confederated Provinces were more successful than in England. He secured from the Government a donation of two thousand florins, payable yearly for five years, besides obtaining help for the prisoners in the Tower of Constance and the galley-slaves at Marseilles. Thanks to his intervention the States entered into negotiation with Louis XV., and procured the freedom of twenty of these unfortunates, who went to settle in Holland, where they received an annuity.

Du Plan obtained access to the Prince of Prussia and the Princess of Orange, during a journey they were making through the Hague, and was munificently presented with one thousand florins.

The following is Du Plan's résumé of his collec-

tions in Holland during the two years he resided there:—

1st. An annuity of two thousand florins extending over a period of five years.

2nd. Another of five hundred florins.

3rd. Another of three hundred florins.

4th. The release of twenty galley slaves with an annuity of three hundred florins for ten of their number, and two hundred and fifty florins for the remaining ten.¹

He unhesitatingly refused every present that was offered to him personally, as he had hitherto done in Switzerland, England and elsewhere; not that his pecuniary circumstances were by any means brilliant, far from it, but from delicacy of conscience. Since the loss of his inheritance the Deputy had lived with the strictest economy.

“ I am like a vessel grounded on a sand bank ; if there come not soon a high tide and a fair wind I run the risk of remaining here long enough to starve my two companions² who, although they have for some time existed on meagre fare, are faithful to me, not knowing indeed which way to turn. As for myself, I have long given up wine and been reduced to beer. Everything is dear ; my room costs me about equal to ten francs per month of Geneva money and the rest in proportion.”

(July 1734.)

1. Statement submitted to the Arbiters.

2. Gas and the preacher Chapel.

Occasionally he tried his luck by putting into the lottery, but with no more success in Holland than in Geneva.

"Fortune does not favour me by chance. It is necessary for me to seek a fortune which has its foundation laid on wisdom and virtue, and it is God alone who can and will by His grace impart the wisdom and virtue requisite to render us happy, independently of worldly riches or glory."

(July 1734.)

Journey in Germany, 1735—1737.

Du Plan quitted Holland, in October 1735, for Prussia but he failed to discover there the same generosity.

"I have been here two months," he wrote to his friend, "and notwithstanding my efforts I see as yet no result. As I do not place my reliance on human means, except as God blesses them, I can afford to wait."

(6th of December 1735.)

After a time he began to weary of his journeys:

"I am desirous of returning into Switzerland as soon as I can. I am tired of travelling about the world and have an ardent wish to see my old friends again."

He endeavoured to obtain an interview with Frederick William, King of Prussia, but his Majesty having his whole thoughts engrossed with the army paid but little attention to the sad tale of the Deputy; another reason was that William being in alliance with Louis XV. could not render aid to men whom the court looked upon as rebels.

Du Plan, in no way discouraged, returned to the charge and wrote again to the King. This time his Majesty promised to intercede with France on behalf of the galley slaves and offered to receive into his kingdom those who wished to take refuge there. He replied to the petition of the Deputy of the Synods in the following terms:

"Monsieur Du Plan,

"Your letter of the 31st of May has been duly received. In reply I beg to state that if you are in a position to indicate to me a certain number of French families who desire to establish themselves here, I will give them a hearty welcome and vouchsafe to them everything that can be demanded in reason, but as to the propositions you meditate submitting to me you must rest assured that I have good reasons for refusing to consider them.

"Yours very affectionately

"F. GUILLAUME."

"Potsdam, the 8th of June 1736."

Despairing of success at Court, Du Plan addressed himself to private individuals. This delicate and troublesome operation was facilitated by friends and countrymen whom he found living in Berlin.

It was about this time that he heard of the arrival of his aunt Lèches and his sister at Geneva. He wrote to them at once.

"Berlin, the 1st of May 1736.

"Mesdemoiselles, my much honored dear mother and sister,

"Praised be the Lord! I learn from a letter, that our good friend M. le pasteur Vial has had the kindness to write

to me, that you have safely arrived at Geneva. The only thing that has somewhat lessened my joy is that my dear mother is indisposed ; I trust, however, if it please God, that she will soon recover. It will be a satisfaction to me to have news from you as soon as possible, as I shall be uneasy till I hear.

"Did my duty and even my temporal interests (as our good friend will better explain to you) not impel me to remain longer in these parts, I should hasten to join you at Geneva ; but it is essential that I postpone this gratification in order that my conscience may not reproach me, and that my own personal affairs do not suffer complication. The latter I hope, with the help of God, so to arrange as to enable us to live on our dividends without trenching on our little capital. I have asked M. Vial, to whom I am under a thousand obligations, the recollection of which will be ever present with me, to restore to you the notes I confided to his care during your absence, and you will do well to seek his counsel, as it is the best you can follow. As you are now in a free country, I will write to you as often as you wish, only give me your address, for it is unfair to put our friends to expense or trouble when we can avoid doing so. I have received many tokens of kindness from our dear country-woman Madame Dumas ¹, whom I look upon as a mother ; I am delighted to hear you are staying at her house and that you have no intention of leaving. As she makes me her heir, I, in return, place all my possessions at her service. Live together and spare nothing which can contribute to your health and comfort without consideration for me, otherwise I shall be disappointed. I thank God that I am at present in very good health, being almost entirely free from an affection of the throat which has troubled me for nearly three years ; the air of Berlin has been conducive to my

1. This was Du Plan's first nurse, for whom he entertained the affection of a son ; she was a refugee at Geneva, before he arrived there.

recovery. The family of M. Meynadier, whom I frequently see, are persons of eminence ; they have shown me much kindness and they greet you. I am also charged to convey the salutations of M. de la Motte, M. de Lamelouse, Mlle de Baudan and the venerable M. de Lancizole, uncle to the inheritor of my father's property, but who has many merits. It is a pleasure to me to meet here persons from our country, as it is for you to meet at Geneva the Mesdames de Lavabre and Baudan, the Messieurs Meynadier and their wives, Messieurs Gasc, Icarde and Felinasse, all of whom I beseech you to salute when you see them. With respect and gratitude I unceasingly commend myself to the good will and the prayers of the three whom I esteem and love so tenderly and whose very humble and affectionate brother and servant I am.

"DU PLAN."

Before leaving Berlin, Du Plan prepared for the Minister of State a list of the galley-slaves and prisoners in order that he might make still another attempt to procure their liberation. That he might do this the more effectually, he endeavoured to induce some other Power to join its efforts to those of Prussia.

"After having used all the means in our power, we must leave the rest to a kind Providence which overrules alike events and the hearts of men to its own wise purposes. I feel assured that I shall be able to procure some little help to comfort them in their distress ; I should have been very successful here, were it not that business is so bad, that poverty so much abounds, and that so many have been ruined by the serious inundations of which you have perhaps heard ; entire villages have been swept away and the king of Prussia himself has lost several millions ¹."

1. Du Plan's Letter to his aunt dated from Magdeburg, 12th of Aug. 1736.

Du Plan after leaving Berlin visited Magdeburg, where he encountered some fellow countrymen from Nismes; he then went to Frankfort, Leipsic and Hamburg, and during these pilgrimages he obtained help for the galley-slaves and prisoners, the Protestant Church of Hamburg alone giving him about one hundred and fifty crowns.

Journey in Denmark, 1737.

Pursuing our journey northward we find Du Plan, in May, 1737, at Copenhagen. Great success awaited him at the Church in that city, where certain of the faithful, uniting with the Court, contributed about fifteen hundred crowns. It was in Copenhagen that he learned the success of his efforts on behalf of the galley slaves, twelve of whom, owing to the joint intervention of Prussia and England, had been happily set free. These successes, however, were not obtained without great exertion.

"I wend my way through the Protestant Christian world; I visit all the Churches of our Communion; I make the acquaintance of our brethren scattered throughout the nations. I address myself specially to those who have been received into neighbouring States, in a spirit of charity, offering them the opportunity of exercising charity in their turn towards those who yet groan beneath the Cross, and who are waging a glorious warfare on behalf of our great King, Jesus Christ. Some listen and show sympathy for the sufferings of their brethren, while others turn a deaf ear, and by actual importunity alone can I extract anything from them; whether owing to want of ability or willingness on their part,

Du Plan sympathizes with Court in his affliction. 229

I cannot tell; but though I have not reaped a large harvest, I have, at least, the consolation of having everywhere secured gleanings not to be despised. It is due to the Churches and to those who control them to say that if they have not always responded to my appeals it is because they have amongst them many poor whom it is their obvious duty to relieve before they assist strangers."

(Copenhagen, 15th of December 1736.)

On learning that Court had been tried by domestic affliction as well as by confiscation of his property in France, Du Plan evinced great sympathy for him, and after having compared his friend's position with his own he added:

"As regards myself, never having had children, I know not what it is to lose them, nor how far the joy of having had them for a time can compensate for the sorrow their loss may occasion; but with respect to worldly goods, I abandoned all when I came away from France, not knowing whether I should ever recover anything. God has, however, by His grace enabled me to gather together sufficient to prevent my becoming burdensome to any, and to prosecute my travels without too much difficulty. I am perfectly willing to employ not only the interest of my little capital but what remains of the principal itself, and even to sacrifice my life, if it be God's will to require it, on behalf of His Church."

(Copenhagen, 21st of April 1737.)

The only hope left to Du Plan after having sacrificed his all for the Churches, was that he might receive proper compensation for his labours. The committee at Geneva took this view and even gave expression to the same through the medium of

Turretin, one of its most distinguished members, who in addressing Du Plan in acknowledgement of the receipt of three thousand *livres*, said :

"My colleagues and I praise God for the happy issue of your diplomacy, praying that our gracious Father may be pleased to protect you and by His infinite mercy to bless your labours in the future as effectually as in the past . . . I refer you to M. Vial for further details, contenting myself by assuring you of the interest we all take in everything that concerns you, and of our firm conviction that the expenses you incur ought to be made good to you.¹"

Journey in Sweden, 1737.

In 1737 Du Plan passed on into Sweden and came to Stockholm. The King received him very favorably and generously granted him an annuity of two hundred crowns. Even the Senate of this kingdom voted him fifty ducats.

The Deputy of the Synods having now to all appearance arrived at the end of his long pilgrimage, many reasons induced him to return to Geneva; both his aunt and his sister were desirous of seeing him again; his health was injured by over fatigue; and, finally, he desired to embrace his dear relatives and friends as well as to enjoy a little repose. God refused him the consolation; at one time the inclemency of the weather and at another the interests of the Churches interfered with his return.

1. Letter from Turretin, dated Geneva, 3rd of December, 1736.

"Much as I wish to come and see you," he wrote from Stockholm to his aunt and sister, "I fear I shall be unable to do so this year, as the season is advanced and I am a long way from Geneva. It is also necessary for me to revisit Holland if I wish to sustain that which I have so happily begun there. I may also be detained on my journey in certain towns of Germany, where I have formed acquaintances calculated to be of service to our brethren. I beseech you not to consider me unkind, because I feel it an urgent duty to fulfil my commission; rest afterwards!"

(Stockholm, 24th of August, 1737.)

"I wish still more than you," he wrote again to his aunt and sister, "to arrive at the end of my pilgrimage, for I am weary of wandering about and of going to and fro in the world. It is only a strong sense of duty and a feeling of compulsion that enables me to overcome the fatigues I encounter on the way."

(Hamburg, November, 1737.)

Return to London, 1738.

Towards the end of 1737, Du Plan left Sweden on his return to Holland, and visited for the second time Copenhagen and Hamburg, in which places he strengthened in their charitable sentiments the benefactors he had already procured for the Churches. On his journey he addressed a statement to the King of Prussia, His Majesty having placed at Du Plan's disposal two hundred crowns "for the relief of the oppressed poor."¹

In January, 1738, Du Plan was at the Hague, whence he addressed a letter to his friend:

1. Letter signed Gram, Friedenberg, 4th of Oct., 1737.

"I reached the Hague some days ago, after having visited the countries of the Goths and Vandals. You have tokens that God has given me grace to glean something everywhere, even though I have not been able to reap a harvest. The commencement is always difficult, but in time we shall make progress. I have had negotiations with men whom I have had to press with importunity before I could obtain anything from them, while others have given cheerfully. Cost what it may, I hope before the end of this year, if it please God, notwithstanding lukewarm charity, to put the whole thing on such a footing as to sustain itself and produce a certain annual income, small though it may be."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACTIVITY OF DU PLAN IN LONDON.

1738—1744.

Du Plan was preparing to set out for Geneva when an unforeseen occurrence all at once changed his plans. On his arrival at the Hague he heard that the Queen of England, his benefactress, was dead, that the society she had been instrumental in founding was dissolved, and that the King, in spite of His Majesty's promises, had not renewed the annual gift. But this was not all; he heard that the English Court had discontinued altogether, for a year past, the annual payment of eight thousand pounds, which since the Revocation had been granted for the use of necessitous refugees. After having written on the subject with urgent solicitude, but without result, Du Plan unhesitatingly resolved

to sacrifice his cherished project of returning to Switzerland and to start instead for London with a view to put new life into his almost defunct work.

It was from London that he wrote to his aunt and sister to apprise them of the sad news.

"Mesdemoiselles, my much honored Aunt and my dear Sister,

"You have no doubt already heard of the death of the Queen of England; it was through the instrumentality of this pious and illustrious Princess that I secured from His Majesty the King a kind of annual pension. It appeared to be so assured that I never anticipated the necessity would so soon arise for me to cross the sea, and I consequently deferred doing so until the latest moment; but finding that my reiterated appeals drew forth no response, and that I had lost my estimable protectress and mediator with the King, I came here about two months since in order to set matters straight, a work of great difficulty and, according to some persons, of absolute impossibility.

"I admit that I am somewhat perplexed, inasmuch as I recollect well that I have promised to rejoin you as soon as possible, and I am constantly encountering unexpected difficulties and delays. If the sum in question were trifling I would have sacrificed it for the pleasure of seeing you, but the business is too important to permit me to treat it with neglect. Difficult as it may be, I shall leave no stone unturned to accomplish my work in time to enable me to visit Geneva this year. I am so weary and fatigued with my travels and the incidental worry and excitement, that if the important interests at stake, and for which I began this campaign, had not sustained me, I should long ago have abandoned my task."

(June 1738) ¹

1. Extracted from the family papers.

When Du Plan arrived at London he was not long in discovering that his work was, so to speak, ruined, and that it would be necessary to go again over the old ground ; nevertheless he did not lose courage, but renewed his efforts with the King and with other personages of wealth and distinction. The difficulties he encountered on his first essay have been already recounted ; they were none the less on his second attempt, and after eight months of unfruitful labour he wrote to his friend as follows :—

“ For more than eight months have I been labouring here without result, except incessant toil and the expenditure of much money. If I did not regard human agency as of secondary importance I should lose all hope. ”

(January 1739).

Ultimately, after great perseverance and endless importunity, Du Plan obtained an audience of the King of England, and secured from this Majesty a fresh grant of one thousand pounds with promise of similar payment every year.

Although so actively occupied abroad he concerned himself none the less with the vicissitudes of the Protestant Church of France.

His correspondence with the preachers kept him well informed of the misfortunes of the Huguenots, a faithful description of whose sufferings he committed to paper and in this way obtained subscriptions on their behalf. In one of these appeals he writes as follows :—

“ Notwithstanding that God, in order to try His Church,

as well as to punish His servants for their forgetfulness of His spiritual and temporal gifts, has permitted the Edict of Nantes to be revoked, our Pastors to be exiled, our flocks to be scattered, our temples to be razed, and persecution to become rampant in a thousand different forms, yet the Lord has not allowed the Light of His Gospel to be utterly extinguished in France; He has always raised up persons, zealous for His glory, who have proclaimed His Word in spite of unjust decrees and violent persecutions.

"These servants of God have formed Churches in various Provinces, specially Lower Languedoc, the Cevennes, Vivarais, and Dauphiny; the Churches have their Pastors and their Elders and meet in yearly Synod, but are under a tyrannical yoke, similar to that of the Churches of the first three centuries in the reigns of heathen Emperors, or to that of the early Christians who, destitute of temples, were constrained to hold their meetings for religious worship in caves, deserts and woods, in secret, and often at night time.

"The greater number of the Preachers, after having instructed, consoled, and edified the people for a time, have sealed with their blood the truths they have proclaimed and have submitted to martyrdom not only with fortitude but joy, while many of their hearers have suffered, and are yet suffering with admirable constancy, for their profession of the faith, either on galleys or in prisons.

"It is on behalf of these willing confessors sinking beneath their load of suffering, bound in fetters with all sorts of malefactors, or shut up in horrible dungeons, that a subscription has been set on foot by charitably disposed persons who concern themselves in the *froissure de Joseph*,¹ and who sympathize with those who are prisoners for the Gospel's sake as if they themselves were in bonds, for they look upon these fellow sufferers as members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, our recognised Master, King, Saviour and God, to whom we look for our highest happiness.

1. The hurting of Joseph. See Psalm CV., v. 17, 18.

"At the present moment the number of galley slaves is eighteen; of prisoners confined in the fort of Brescou, which is surrounded by the sea, ten; twenty-two are confined in the Tower of Constance, without reckoning seventeen women who were recently arrested near Nismes on their return from attending a religious assembly, and are now under sentence of perpetual imprisonment in the said tower.

"It has also been recently announced that two ministers in Vivarais, named Verney and Lassagne, were shot while flying before a detachment of soldiers; and further, that in the same locality seven women have been arrested, one of them being the wife of M. de Lassagne, a lady who expects shortly to be confined. The fate of all these victims of persecution will be imprisonment according to the decrees.

"The Tower of Constance, situated at Aigues-Mortes, a town of Lower Languedoc, is a dreadful prison to which those alone are sent who are doomed to die a slow and lingering death. Aigues-Mortes was once a port, but the sea has left it, and commerce and manufacture have deserted it. Round its ancient walls stretch dismal swamps and barren fields, the air is filled with a deadly malaria, there is no wholesome water within a distance of two leagues; funerals are frequent in the city, and its few surviving inhabitants, appear to be in perpetual mourning for departed friends. But wretched as is Aigues-Mortes the Tower of Constance is still more miserable. Into that abode of woe the outward air penetrates only by a few holes pierced through its massive walls, the poor prisoners, shut out from the light of the sun, are immured as in a living tomb whose terrible monotony of gloom and cold neither the brightness of spring nor the warmth of summer ever varies. When seized by illness there is none to minister to them, and in the case of most a life of severe suffering is speedily terminated by an eagerly welcomed death.

"There are some, however, who in spite of their sufferings, survive in this horrible den for ten, fifteen or twenty years, owing either to their strength of constitution, or to

the will of God in preserving them in order that they may be for others living examples of constancy, piety, and virtue. Among the galley slaves are found both men and women of all ages, from twenty to eighty-four years, that being the age of the father of M. Durand, the faithful minister who suffered martyrdom about nine years ago.

"It is an undoubted fact that except in certain towns where trade is brisk, the people of France are very poor ; but besides poverty and physical sufferings the Protestants have long been sorely tried through the entrapping of their children, through arbitrary impositions, and through confiscations and fines, which have so impoverished our people that they are utterly unable to succour their captive co-religionists.

"Twenty-five young lads have been placed in a Catholic school at Alais and forty young girls have been shut up in a convent at Anduze, a town in the Cevennes, without counting other children or adults who have been carried off and incarcerated in neighbouring provinces where the zeal for persecution is from time to time revived.

"All these statements may be verified by letters and attestations from persons worthy of implicit confidence. They will, without doubt, move the hearts of the pious and charitable to contribute to the relief of their brethren and sisters in Christ a portion of the worldly goods with which God has blessed them, while the faithful confessors themselves, imbued with a true and lively sense of gratitude, will offer their earnest prayers to God on behalf of their generous benefactors.

"The prayers of the faithful when offered in earnestness are potent for the securing of Heaven's blessings and for averting the threatened judgments of the Almighty.

"Convinced by the many letters we receive, and from the testimony of trustworthy persons who are willing to contribute to this laudable object, of the truth of our statements it is with pleasure that we append our signatures.

"London, . . . 1739."

This appeal met with a favorable hearing and Du Plan had the pleasure of receiving many gifts which he transmitted to his brethren on the King's galleys, and to his sisters in the Tower of Constance. Chapel, on his return to England, was entrusted with letters of thanks from some of the faithful confessors.

In reading the original of these letters discoloured by age, written within the massive walls of the Tower of Constance by two women who had grown old in their imprisonment, or on the galley "Héroïne" by two heroic convicts, we have felt the tears rise to our eyes. Though the writing, as to style and the orthography, is that of persons not highly educated, the sentiments are elevated and dignified. The first letter is signed by two prisoners named Vigne and Soleyrol, natives of Alais. Jacqueline Vigne was forty-five years old when, on the 22nd of September, 1726, she was arrested on account of her religion and shut up in the Tower; Anne Soleyrol, the daughter of a baker, was aged twenty three years when, on the 2nd of January, 1738, she was imprisoned for having attended an assembly. In the register recording the conduct of the prisoners we read under date of the year 1745.

"*Jacquette Vigne.* Belief unchanged."

"*Anne Soleyrol.* Belief unchanged."

Women of this stamp alone were capable of engraving on a paving stone in the Tower of Constance the touching, soul-inspiring, and courage-giving word, which yet remains: *Resistez!*

Jacquette Vigne and Anne Soleyrol, grateful to

Du Plan for the interest which, while in a distant country, he had manifested in the poor captives, wrote to him on the 27th of March, 1740, as follows :

“ Monsieur,

“ We have been honored by the receipt of your kind and sympathetic letter and deeply affected by the pious exhortations you have been good enough to offer us ; we regard them as a favor from Heaven, as it is thereby evident that God will never abandon us, since he raises up persons so respected as yourself for our help, notwithstanding the cruelty of our enemies who look upon us as the offscourings of the earth ; and not our enemies only, but many who ought to give us the right hand of fellowship, and it is this which adds to the hardship of our captivity ; but we hope, Monsieur, through your charitable and zealous exertions and your fervent prayers, that under God’s blessing we shall receive some mitigation of our sufferings, and that many pious persons will follow your example. While very humbly grateful, Monsieur, for your charitable solicitude, we pray that you may have grace to continue the same, so long as it shall please the Lord to prolong our imprisonment. The Messieurs of Alais have kindly written to say that you have forwarded some help for us, but we have not yet received it. We are in all thirty-one prisoners, mostly widows and orphans, and you are not, Monsieur, unacquainted with our wants. In commending ourselves to your devout prayers, and beseeching you to ask for us those of the Church also, we on our side will ever supplicate the Divine Being to bestow upon you every prosperity and His most precious blessings, both spiritual and temporal. These are the wishes, Monsieur, of those who have the honor to subscribe themselves, with much respect and regard, your very humble and obedient servants, the prisoners,

“ VIGNE.

“ SOLEYROL.”

In the Tower of Constance, Aigues-Mortes, the 27th of March, 1740.

The following is the letter of the two galley-slaves at Marseilles. Villevaire had during twenty five years been one of Roger's most devoted companions in work. For a long time he had fulfilled the office of reader in the assemblies, as well as catechist and preacher, and he had been appointed by several of the Provincial Synods to the post of Secretary. He was arrested on the 15th of June, 1736, and condemned to a life on the galleys.¹

"For Messieurs La Plaine and Du Plan.

"Messieurs and much honored brethren in our Lord Jesus Christ,

"I have received the letter of the 25th of October, 1739, with which you have been pleased to honor me, and I learn from it with especial pleasure that you are both in the enjoyment of good health. God grant that the present letter may find you in the same condition. All the confessors are well. Praised be the Lord for all your charitable exertions on our behalf, and for which we return you our thanks. God will help you in your work and reward you for your labours; He can do both, for He commands and it is done. Darkness flies before the light of His word. We feel confident that your efforts will not be fruitless for, while you on your side are describing our captivity and the causes of our sufferings to persons who are ignorant of these things and whose compassion may thereby be moved in our favour, we on our side are so humbled by God as to be incapable even if we wished of rejecting their kind offices; we find ourselves comforted under our afflictions by their beneficence and may, perhaps,—what we should like still better—be delivered by their efforts from our bonds.

1. See the interesting details of his life and capture as given in *Jacques Roger*, by D. Benoit, p. 149, 152.

"Having, by the grace of God, made a Christian profession and become enrolled in the spiritual militia, we are bound to be faithful soldiers and to submit to the Lord's will: our chains are where He has placed them, and it is our duty to bear patiently all the sufferings by which we are tried for the sake of the Gospel, until it shall please Him to release us. How do we know whether God, in permitting this long persecution, and in permitting new captives to take the places of the old ones as fast as these are called away, does not intend continually to reprove the lukewarm, the worldly, the cowardly and the timid who have turned away from the battle and abandoned the truth. The fancied wisdom of men is confounded by the unerring wisdom of God. Our persecutors think to dishonor and disgrace us by putting us with malefactors and inflicting on us the same hardships, but in this we are honored of God who gives us cause for rejoicing in that He counts us worthy to bear shame for the name of Jesus.

"God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that suffering with Him we may be also glorified together, knowing that Christ, who went through tribulations, as was spoken by the prophets, and who has entered into His glory, has told us that we shall be reviled and persecuted for His name's sake. We are not to look for happiness in this life, it is reserved for the future. Our life is hid with Christ in God, but when Christ who is our life shall appear then shall we also appear with him in glory. Let us remain satisfied for the present with the promise God gives us of an everlasting felicity, while we witness in our own time and in our own persons the accomplishment of the persecutions with which faithful Christians must expect to be tried. And let us also strengthen ourselves in our confession of the true faith, trusting, and praying that God in His mercy may give us strength to persevere unto the end.

"Please present our humble respects to M. de Vernon and his sons who, in passing through Marseilles, gave us proofs of their charity. God will reward them for their good deeds

„ We desire our affectionate respects to Madame D'Estampes and her family, also to Monsieur Ofrère, and to all who are endeavouring to strike off our chains or to help us in our sad condition, and be assured, Messieurs and brethren in Christ, that I am with heartfelt affection, your very humble and obedient servant

“VILLEVAIRE.”

Another confessor adds the following lines to this letter :

“ Monsieur,

“ I take advantage of the remainder of the paper in order to wish you many happy years and much prosperity in this world, and a glorious entrance into Paradise when your earthly course is finished. May God in His Fatherly goodness bestow upon you His most precious gifts and further your righteous enterprise. I trust you will not be unmindful in your prayers of my sad condition, and I am, Monsieur, with a profound respect, your very humble and submissive servant

“GLEIZE, on the galley *Héroïne*.”

“ If I seem to have been dilatory in writing to you, it is because our brother Villevaire kept the letter of our brother Chapel for six weeks without shewing it to me. My respects to our brother Chapel. Our brother Martin makes his profound respects to you both and recommends himself to your compassionate consideration.”

Du Plan had almost completed his work, and was making final arrangements to respond to the appeals of his aunt and his sister by setting out for Geneva, when a new and important event—the death of the King of Prussia—caused another alteration in his plans. His Majesty had rendered some service

to the Churches by obtaining from Louis XV. at the instance of Du Plan, the release of several persons recently arrested; but owing to his friendly relations with France he was prevented from interfering to any further extent in religious matters. It was this monarch who had personally addressed a letter to Du Plan.¹ His son and successor to the throne, it was said, was not bound to exercise such precaution.

Du Plan hesitated whether to go and plead his cause at Berlin or to return to Geneva. He submitted the question to his aunt for her decision.

"Were I a young man and at liberty to pursue my own course, I should not have hesitated to go as soon as I heard of the death of the King; but being in my fifty-third year, of a delicate constitution and utterly weary of long journeys in countries whose language I am unable to speak, I have determined to write by the first post to Berlin to ascertain whether it is necessary for me to go thither. I also write to you, my dear aunt and mother, to ask whether in case I am wanted at Berlin you would wish me to call first at Geneva in fulfilment of my promise, or whether you will consent that I should visit Berlin before returning to Geneva, if it please God, for the rest of my days. I have such a sincere and ardent desire to see you, and am so mortified at the prospect of being obliged to postpone my return, that supposing I have to visit Berlin I would attempt with God's help to surmount the fatigues which the long journey thither by way of Geneva would involve. Instead of being offended with me I beseech you to have compassion, in that I am forced to restrain my inclination in order to fulfil my duty. I await

1. See his letter on page 225.

your definite reply as to which course you wish me to adopt."

(London, the 18th of June 1840.)

The worthy aunt consented once more to the postponement of Du Plan's return; nevertheless in her affectionate reply she could not refrain from charging her nephew, in spite of his defence of himself, with a somewhat pronounced taste for travelling. Du Plan's persevering efforts were at least not always fruitless. He had the satisfaction of learning that he had gained his case in England on behalf of the refugees, although it had cost him, it is true, much labour as well as money.

"I have obtained a verdict with costs, and even supposing I have sacrificed my personal interests on behalf of my brethren, *I trust now that a commencement has been made the day will arrive when my brethren will testify their acknowledgements*¹.

Du Plan departed for Berlin, hoping to meet there with the same success as in England, when to his great disappointment he heard that Prussia had declared war against Silesia; and although this event was a fresh discouragement and prevented him, apart from his own wishes, from returning to his aunt and sister, he did not fail to interest himself in their welfare or neglect to minister to their wants according to his ability.

"I hear," he wrote to them, "that you exercise the strictest economy. This is not desirable when one has

1. Du Plan's letter to his aunt, dated September, 1740. It is the Author who underlines the latter portion.

reached a certain age and has need of additional comforts; I therefore pray you to take more care of yourself than you have hitherto done, and I say the same to my sister to whom I renew my assurance of warmest affection. When you no longer have means either from France or at Geneva, everything I possess in this world is at your disposal. Can I fail to offer you my services after the many tokens of friendship received at your hands, and which I can never forget?"

(26th of February, 1741.)

This letter was one of the last that Madame Lèches received from her nephew; she died in the course of the year 1741 without having had the joy and consolation of embracing for a last time him whom she loved as a son, and who, as we discover from Du Plan's correspondence, fully reciprocated her affection. After the death of his aunt, Du Plan concentrated all his thoughts on his sister, isolated at Geneva, and, far away as he was, he anticipated all her wants to the extent of imposing such sacrifices on himself as to awaken the friendly solicitude of his aged friend the Pastor Vial de Beaumont. Vial, knowing the precarious position of Du Plan, and his slender income, considered it his duty to write him the following letter advising him to be more careful of his resources and to provide for the future.

"Monsieur and very dear friend,

"You are too sensible of the trifling services I have rendered to the late Madame Lèches, your aunt; I would assure you, I wish that they had been many times multiplied as it was only for her to command them. I had the greatest

regard for her, a regard due as much to her own personal qualities as to the warm affection and high esteem which I entertain for you. I wish Mlle Suzon De Ribot were less reserved and more willing to believe in my desire to serve her; on many occasions when I could have been useful to her she has failed to inform me. Be that as it may, however, she is tolerably well provided for; she still receives something from France, which, added to the income from the little remaining capital, is sufficient to enable her to live comfortably for the rest of her days. Do not, therefore, be anxious about her, or consider that you are under any obligation to send her money. Think rather of yourself, my dear friend! I know not what property is still left to you in France, nor if it be practicable for you to obtain anything from that country; I only know that very little remains in Geneva, and that with the exception of your furniture, the debt due to you by M. Joly, the lame man, and some other trifle of the same kind, you have scarcely more than two thousand francs ready money. Seeing to what straits you are reduced, I beseech you, my dear friend, to take some thought for yourself and labour under God's blessing to provide for the future. Fages has received the *louis d'or* and the fourteen *livres* you directed to be paid to him; do not, however, trouble yourself any more about this man, several people have assured me that he is in comfortable circumstances. Refrain for the future from giving so freely as you have done hitherto; too great liberality is a fault on the right side, but it is nevertheless a fault, and I beseech you to rectify it. It is true that under God's blessing the fund belonging to our Churches has increased, but it is by no means certain that this prosperity will continue, that expenses will not augment in the same proportion, or that the managers of the fund will always acknowledge your services as they deserve.¹ I trust I shall always be devoted.

1. These words are underlined by the author.

to your well being, and that I shall render you every service in my power, but I am old and infirm, the time of my departure is at hand, and even if death do not soon put an end to all my labours, I shall feel myself constrained to surrender as many engagements as I can, be they what they may. My colleagues and I beseech you to suffer no privation ; there is still money in the hands of our friend M. Gaussen which we place at your disposal in a spirit of Christian love.

"Mademoiselle Suzon De Ribot has just left my study ; she has shown me the letter you wrote to her, enclosed in one addressed to M. Paul Gaussen under date the 19th of this month. She acknowledges with thanks the marks of your friendship, and begs you to be assured of her unchanging attachment. She declines to accept the ten guineas you placed at her disposal some weeks since through M. Gaussen, as she thinks you have more need of them than she has, and she desires your happiness more than her own. Both she and I beseech you in the name of God to lay by something for your declining years, so that you will not be dependent on others. Mademoiselle Jalabert of Alais, who lives in the same house as Mlle Suzon, has a niece who sleeps there, and should the daughter of M. Trelis also come she will receive a hearty welcome. The poor woman Icard still survives ; she is in fair health and is preparing to pass the winter in Switzerland—at Yverdon, with a married lady of Geneva who wishes her to live with her. Mlle Suzon asks if you will be good enough to tell her whether she may hope to see you once more during her lifetime or whether it will be with her as with your aunt. Endeavour to satisfy her desire, and believe me always, Monsieur and dear friend, your very humble and obedient servant

"VIAL DE BEAUMONT."

"Geneva, the 30th of October 1741."

Du Plan profited from his detention in London, during the winter of 1741, to collect a considerable

sum of money for the captives in France, which he duly transmitted to M. Vial de Beaumont. This was his answer to those who were beginning to reproach him for his long sojourn in England, on the ground that his presence there was useless and burdensome to the Churches. The individual who showed the most ill will was M. Serces, Pastor of the French Chapel at St. James'.

"My friend, M. Serces," wrote Du Plan to M. Vial, "in the belief that I am laboring in vain and spending money uselessly, has several times heartily desired to banish me from the country. God be praised, however, both he and some others who think with him are greatly mistaken. Happy are they who put their trust in God, they will never be disappointed. I will avail myself of another opportunity to tell you more on this subject, especially as our friend M. Serces is in correspondence with you."

(18th of December, 1741.)

After this date the letters of Du Plan became less frequent, but his *Statement to the Arbitrators*, with the preparation of which he was now occupied, sufficiently explains their rarity and accounts for his prolonged stay in England. We have already mentioned that since his return to London, the Deputy of the Churches had procured the continuation of the annual grant from the King of England which had been temporarily suspended. Du Plan waited till the year had expired before renewing his application. His Majesty being in Germany, his ministers very much occupied, and the Treasury empty,

the Deputy's numerous and pressing demands for the thousand pounds were of no avail. Wearied with his incessant appeals and continued refusals, he at length proposed to Lord Wilmington, who had succeeded Sir Robert Walpole as First Lord of the Treasury, that the Royal gift to the Churches should be reduced to five hundred pounds, on condition that the amount should be regularly paid and even made a charge on the Consolidated Fund, but notwithstanding that this proposition was accepted, the five hundred pounds were no more forthcoming than the thousand pounds had been. On this Du Plan resolved to address himself directly to the King and claim the sum as originally promised. His Majesty was surprized and in all probability blamed the Minister, for Lord Wilmington was annoyed and accused the Deputy of complaining to the King. Du Plan in justification of his conduct produced a copy of his letter; this appeared to have the effect of pacifying Lord Wilmington, for he paid the five hundred pounds and promised for the future to befriend the Churches. But the year following, when the Deputy again made his claim at the Treasury, Lord Wilmington angrily reproached him, much to the astonishment of Du Plan, for the outburst had no other cause than the importunity of his demands. M. Serces, who happened to be present, took advantage of this occurrence by attempting to injure the Deputy's character with the Committee at Geneva.

While Du Plan's thoughts were occupied by this matter (in 1743) he received the affecting news of

the death of his sister.¹ For seven years she had been a refugee at Geneva, living with her aunt and valued friend Madame Jeanne Dumas. The latter died in 1740 and Madame Lèches, as we have already stated, in the following year. Suzanne De Ribot, whose sorrow at the event was extreme, found devoted protectors in the friends of her brother; the hope of soon again seeing him had supported her under her misfortunes and her isolation; a hope, alas, that was doomed to be disappointed!

In evidence of her affection for her brother she bequeathed him her modest dowry and by this means Du Plan's circumstances were improved. Nevertheless the expenses incident to his prolonged sojourn in England, and above all his liberality, so awakened the solicitude of Vial de Beaumont as to draw from that old friend a second letter.

"Geneva, the 19th of April 1743.

"Monsieur and very dear friend,

"My age, my infirmities, and the goodness of my friends, having forced me to relinquish active interference with the affairs of our brethren, it is scarcely to be expected that I should keep up my correspondence with you. Indeed I should have remained silent if my cordial affection, and sincere esteem for you did not compel me once more to refer to the little sum of money belonging to you, which yet remains in the hands of M. Gaussen. Reflect, I beseech you, that, in the first place, this sum is very small, not more than five or six thousand

1. Suzanne de Ribot who was nine years older than her brother was born on the 6th of November, 1679, at the Château de la Favède, and, baptised in the parish of Soustelle by a Pastor of the Desert.

livres; secondly that it constitutes the greater part of your property; and, thirdly, that it behoves you to husband it very carefully, because your friends, conscious of your merits, are desirous that nothing should induce you to deprive yourself of the comfort it will afford you; times may change, you may one day find yourself in actual want and become dependent on the cheap charity that dispenses only fine words. And even should this not come to pass you will always find plenty of people ready to accept your liberality; you may bequeath the money to whomsoever it may please you; in a word there is a species of rashness in incurring the risk of want in our old age, if this risk can be avoided. As these sentiments are not mine alone, but are shared by all our friends, I speak in the common name when I ask you to turn a deaf ear to the importunate and to that class of people so plentiful in the world, swindlers and spongers. Do not moreover make such frequent demands on your little fund with M. Gaussen; it is nearly all invested and brings you in an interest not to be despised. We, one and all, beseech you to reflect seriously on what we are suggesting, and to let us know your ultimate decision in order that we may act accordingly. We are not unmindful that you are at liberty to dispose of your own as you wish, and we have no desire to control you—we simply advise. And as they who serve the Church ought to live by the Church, we further advise you to accept the pension which our friends at present can and are willing to grant you, and leave untouched the money in the hands of M. Gaussen either to be invested or to be sunk in an annuity. I have heard it said more than once that M. Maurice received last vintage from Messieurs Picot and Closière the hundred crowns you intended for him. All your friends salute you. Salute in turn our friends in London, especially Messieurs Gaussen and Serces, and believe me, Monsieur, that I shall be, for the remainder of my days, your very dear friend and humble and obedient servant,

“VIAL DE BEAUMONT.”

All the fears of Vial de Beaumont were, unfortunately, justified by the event, and Du Plan was destined to experience the ingratitude and malice of his fellow men.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE MATTER OF DU PLAN.

In 1744 a committee in connection with the one at Geneva was organised in London for the purpose, amongst other things, of transmitting to Geneva the funds collected by the Deputy. This Committee was composed of the Pastor Serces (nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury) and Messieurs Schaub and Vernon. Scarcely had it been constituted when the personal hostility which Serces had more than once manifested towards the Deputy of the Synods burst forth in all its fury. We have already shown, by a letter from Vial de Beaumont to his friend DuPlan, that this animosity had commenced as far back as the year 1741. Serces conceiving that he was now set in authority over Du Plan, and having vainly endeavoured to drive him from London, commenced a correspondence with Geneva, which was nothing but one incessant defamation of his character, the object of Serces being to induce the committee in that city to recall the Deputy, perhaps with the secret hope that he himself might afterwards obtain the appointment. Be that as it may,

Serces scrupled at nothing to accomplish his object.

His first proceeding was to accuse Du Plan of associating with the Inspired, a party who received but little either of sympathy or respect from English Protestants, and who were openly denounced by the Consistory of one of the French Churches as blasphemers and cheats. So numerous were the libellous pamphlets published on the subject, that at last the Bishop of London was compelled to interfere and put a stop to their further issue. But in spite of this vehement persecution the Inspired were not without partisans, and obtained some notoriety, not a little of which was due to the countenance afforded them by Du Plan. The Deputy of the Churches had omitted to observe his formal engagement not to associate with them during his term of office, and it was this more than anything else that lent support to the calumnies of his enemies, and helped to discredit him with his friends at London and Geneva and in France.

The opposition which the Inspired had provoked recoiled upon the Deputy, and was made by Serces a cause of complaint in his letters to Geneva; he said that Du Plan, by his intercourse with the Inspired, had ruined his own influence and compromised the interests of the Church, that his presence in London had not been required for a considerable time, that his work was finished, and by remaining there he was only incurring unnecessary expense. Serces said further that under pretence

of having to attend at Court and associate with distinguished personages, the Deputy lived in a large house and made a display which was not by any means in character with the object of his mission. Serces went so far as to insinuate that this outlay came from the proceeds of the Deputy's collections, to the great loss of the Churches.

Still further to injure Du Plan, Serces gave a one-sided account of the scene which he had witnessed in the office of the Minister, while with much emphasis he repeated the absurd prediction of the Inspired that Du Plan would one day become King, and the ridiculous rumour that he aspired to the hand of one of the King's daughters.

The Committee at Geneva, though sorely perplexed by these charges, knew enough of Du Plan to feel sure that they had no foundation in fact. They were aware also that he took so deep personal interest in the Churches that he would not, either rightly or wrongly, compromise himself in the manner and to the extent imputed to him. Notwithstanding these considerations, however, they allowed themselves to be overborne by the importunities of Court, who was the monthpiece of a party, and recalled the Deputy.

While these things were going on at Geneva a Synod held in France, being informed of what was transpiring in London, resolved upon replacing Du Plan by Antoine Court in the office of Deputy. Court, meantime having been summoned into France in order to settle an ecclesiastical dispute, happened

to be present at the Synod which decided on this important measure. He perceived that this time it would be useless to attempt to stem the torrent of opposition directed against the Deputy; he consented therefore, sacrificed his friend, and yielding to the wishes of the assembly accepted the honor they sought to confer upon him. On his return to Geneva he wrote to Du Plan announcing this important news:—

“ Monsieur and dear friend,

“ You will doubtless be surprised to hear from this letter that I have within the last few days returned, by the grace of God, from Languedoc after a stay there of four months.

“ I was induced to make this journey by the repeated and pressing solicitations of the principal Churches in Lower Languedoc and the Cevennes, with a view to terminating certain dissensions, which had grown to such a height as to threaten the very existence of the Churches.

“ The Lord in His great goodness has blessed my labours beyond my most sanguine hopes, and I am glad to inform you that the sad differences which have so long distracted the Churches have been brought to an end, and that through the labours of the arbitrators appointed by the contending parties peace has been happily restored.

“ The excesses into which the disagreement had led the Churches, the misfortunes which were hanging over them, the fearful abysses into which they were on the point of falling—all these things and many others, Monsieur and dear friend, are too numerous to be condensed into this brief letter.

“ Amongst various other objects I proposed to myself was the highly necessary one of concerting effectual measures for confirming our co-religionists in their loyalty to

the King and his Government, under the critical circumstances of the present time, and to establish a common policy among the Churches scattered throughout the various Provinces of the kingdom, for the general good and for the advancement of religion. I reserve a description of all that I have to tell in this regard until I have the pleasure of seeing you. Meanwhile I may mention that religious zeal is greatly revived in the hearts of the Protestants, and nothing can be more worthy of admiration than the enthusiasm of the thousands of the faithful when gathered in their assemblies, which are very frequently held in full daylight, notwithstanding the efforts I made during my stay to avoid such risks.

" I was present at a National Synod, which lasted from the 18th to the 24th of August inclusive, and which was composed of Pastors and Deputies from the Churches of Normandy, Upper and Lower Poitou, the district of Aunis, Saintonge, Comté de Foix, Agenois, Périgord, Upper and Lower Guienne, Upper and Lower Languedoc, the Cevennes, Vivarais and Dauphiny. This honored assembly has drawn up a code of rules comprising twenty six articles, the object of which is to maintain order and to strengthen the Churches. One of the rules forbids the Pastors, Elders, and Faithful from entering into any controversy with the Catholics, either by word of mouth or by writing, exhorting them rather to bear with patience the unavoidable evils of their lot. They are further enjoined not to give offence to their neighbours by working on Catholic holydays. Another rule obliges the Churches which have the most Pastors to help less fortunate Churches, until it shall please God to supply the wants of all. But you can understand, Monsieur, that it is impossible in this letter to give a description of all the rules adopted and all that transpired at this Synod, a more numerous and more influential Synod than any that has been held since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, I limit myself for the present to informing you that the proceedings were conducted throughout with conspicuous ability and

prudence to the end that the Court on hearing (as doubtless it will hear) of what took place, may have no reasonable pretext for dissatisfaction, and that we may obtain the approval of the foreigners who take an interest in the welfare of our Churches.

"But, Monsieur and dear friend, I must not omit to tell you that the Pastors and Deputies at this National Synod have expressed a wish that you should be more within reach of their instructions, in order that they may be enabled to act according to the exigencies of the situation and as circumstances may dictate. In other words it would appear that all who have the control in matters of religion, either in this country or in France, are of opinion that for many reasons you should return to Geneva, the chief of these reasons having reference to the present crisis arising from the war now existing between France and England, and the obligation under which French Protestants are placed of so conducting themselves as to give no pretexts for imputations on their loyalty and patriotism, which might be the case were they to continue to maintain a Deputy in England.

"It is probably for these and other reasons that the Synod, without any solicitation on my part, has judged it prudent to request me, while in no way mixing myself up in other matters, simply to represent the interests of the Churches abroad; and I may add that, since my return here, the most influential of our beloved friends have assured me that it is more than ever necessary, in consequence of the war, that the loyalty of the Protestants should be above suspicion, and that it is for their best interests that you should return to this country and confer with our brethren, for the general good, in reference to existing and possible circumstances, as the same may arise.

"These views appear to me to be altogether in harmony with the sentiments and the well being of our beloved Churches, and having no doubt that they will equally commend themselves to your approval, I venture to hope

that you will not delay your return to Geneva, where on your arrival you will receive more ample information than I can now give you, and where it will be my duty and my pleasure to act in concert with you, and to renew the assurance of that devoted affection with which I have the honor to remain, Monsieur and dear friend, your very humble and obedient servant,

"A. COURT."

"Geneva, the 12th of December 1744."

This cleverly written letter was destined to rouse the susceptibilities of the Deputy, who, correctly surmising the reason for his recall, suspected Antoine Court of desiring to supplant him; and believing his old friend to have been guilty of unfair dealing, his resentment was kindled and he refused to leave London.

The irritation increasing, the two former friends exchanged letters that are painful to read, and in mournful contrast with those with which we are already acquainted. Antoine Court having, in point of fact, been elected Deputy, became the direct representative of the Churches, while Serces upheld in London the interests of the Geneva Committee. As for Du Plan, he took this occasion to unmask his antagonist and succeeded in convicting him of calumny and falsehood.

But the thing that most deeply touched his feelings as a gentleman and Christian were the imputations cast on his honor and integrity, to defend himself from which he appealed to ministers of several denominations and to others who had long known him, and drew from them the following statements. These he then placed before his accusers

and by this means he thoroughly cleared himself from the charges with which it had been sought to ruin his reputation. The first is a certificate in which the accusations of Serces are briefly recounted by one who could testify to their character.

“London, the 30th of July, 1751.

“I, the undersigned, certify that M. Du Plan, desiring to re-establish if possible a good understanding between himself and M. Serces, Pastor, in the hope that they may be able to act together for the common good of the Churches of France for whom M. Du Plan acts as Deputy at the Courts of foreign Protestant Powers, requested me to accompany him to the house of the said M. Serces in order that I might be an eye-witness of what might transpire. After the customary salutations, M. Du Plan explained to M. Serces the object of his visit, and asked him if there was no way of arriving at an agreement. To this *Sieur Serces* indignantly replied, ‘No, I neither can nor will have any intercourse with you; you have wasted the Churches’ money; a fanatic yourself, your dealings are almost exclusively with visionaries; you have dared to aspire to the hand of the Princess Amelia, and are therefore virtually guilty of high treason; and finally, inasmuch as your constituents have revoked your commission, you have nothing whatever to do with the Churches of France.’

“I further certify that M. Serces, not satisfied with fabricating these stories which have no other foundation than his own imagination, has bruited them abroad, not as conjectures merely but as positive facts, and that owing thereto I have had considerable difficulty in disabusing the minds of certain individuals who had formed false estimates of M. Du Plan’s character.

“LAVAL.”

Du Plan did not let the matter rest here. He appealed to a subsequent Synod and explanations

were made which confounded his enemies. On the 11th of September, 1748, at a Synod assembled in the Cevennes, the following question was discussed at his instance:—The transfer of the office of Deputy from Du Plan to Antoine Court—was the purpose of this measure to cast a slur on the character of the former, and if so what motives could be assigned for such a proceeding? Du Plan, not unmindful that he was almost unknown to the majority of the Pastors composing this assembly—all his old friends being dead or in exile—nevertheless did not hesitate to appeal to the Synod, and calmly and with a clear conscience, awaited the result. His expectations were not disappointed, as will be seen from the following communication which he received through a member of the Synod specially delegated for that purpose:—

“Lower Languedoc, May 5, 1749.

“Monsieur and honored brother in Jesus Christ,

“The delegates of the Churches of this kingdom at a National Synod held in the Cevennes, from the 11th to the 18th of September last, after having mentioned you and your work on behalf of our beloved Churches in eulogistic terms, have adopted certain resolutions in regard thereto and have conferred upon me the honor of communicating them to you; but not knowing your address, I have been compelled to defer the execution of this pleasing duty until the present moment. The following, then, is what I have to communicate to you from the said Synod.

“1. A sincere and humble acknowledgement of the important services you have so and long generously rendered and still render to the Churches.

"2. That you are maintained in the office of Deputy General of the Protestant Churches of the kingdom.

"3. That by the appointment of M. Court to a like office in 1744, the said appointment being hereby confirmed, it was neither then, nor is it now intended to give you a successor, but simply a colleague with whom you may act in concert and on terms of perfect equality for the one sole object—the good of the Churches.

"4. That all points in dispute regarding yourself be remitted for the decision of friends at Geneva who are interested in the affairs of our Churches.

"Such, Monsieur and honored brother, is the duty which has been entrusted to me as touching yourself. I wish I had been able to discharge it earlier; the delay, however, enables me to add a fifth article which, though not committed to paper, was none the less adopted by the Synod; viz, that you should be exhorted to write from time to time to the Churches in order to keep them well informed of the state of their affairs, both past and present, in the country you at present occupy. Your silence has been complained of by all the delegates."

The following statements are refutations of the calumnies of which Du Plan was the object:—

"Monsieur Du Plan, being apprised that certain evil disposed persons have circulated rumours disparaging to his character, and our attention having been drawn thereto, we assert that, whatever the semblance of truth in which they may have been disguised, they cannot impose upon the unbiassed judgment of those who have known him, since they are altogether at variance with his former conduct extending over a great many years—conduct uniformly wise, upright, and disinterested—and confirmed by the testimony of many distinguished persons most qualified to judge and furthest removed from prejudice.

"We further certify that for fourteen years we have been on terms of close intimacy with M. Du Plan, and that so far

from his conduct amongst us having been such as in any way to form a pretext for the sinister rumours by which it is now in a manner sought to tarnish his reputation, it has been altogether such, both according to our own knowledge and the authenticated testimony of the Churches, as to demonstrate the baseless character of the calumnies in question.

"Finally, the majority of we, the undersigned, having had occasion to co-operate with Monsieur Du Plan in his mission, and having thereby been brought into frequent contact with him, are convinced of his honesty, as well as of his care and zeal for the interests committed to his charge, and we conceive that these qualities are incompatible with the damaging reflections which have been cast upon his good name, with a view to diminish the value of his services, and to render them useless by making him an object of contempt.

"In belief of which we append our signatures to this certificate.

"London, August 1749.

"PIERRE STEHELIN, Minister of the united Churches of Leicester Fields, the Artillery and the Patent.

"PAUL COVENENT, Minister of the French Church in London.

"J. J. MAJENDIE, Minister of the Savoy.

"JEAN DES CHAMPS, Minister of the Savoy.

"ETIENNE ABEL LAVAL, Minister of the united Chapels of Berwick Street and Castle Street.

"SAMUEL CODERC, one of the Ministers of the Chapels of Berwick Street and Castle Street.

"CESAR DE MISSY, Minister of the Savoy.

"G. CANTIER, one of the Ministers of the Chapels of Berwick Street and Castle Street."

"We, the undersigned, taking a lively interest in all that concerns the Churches of France, and having had much to do with two of the best and most distinguished friends¹ of those Churches, hereby certify that these friends remain on good terms with the Deputy, of whom they appear to think very highly, and they believe that, so far from having misappropriated or spent upon himself funds belonging to the Churches, he has ruined himself by his efforts on their behalf. They are further of opinion that the only doubt entertained by the arbitrators who are now occupied with his case refers to the amount of compensation which ought to be awarded to him, while the Deputy himself, although he has endeavoured to render a just estimate of his claims, has, in remitting his statement for decision, announced that, whatever amount he may receive, he will still be ready, as he always has been, to sacrifice for the welfare of the Churches anything that can reasonably be demanded of him.

"We further certify that to the best of our belief our Royal benefactor² has never requested the Deputy to quit the kingdom, but has simply intimated to him that his presence is no longer required at Court, inasmuch as his arduous labours have had the result he desired—that of putting the whole object of his mission on a solid basis since the year 1748. And we are firmly persuaded from our thorough knowledge of the facts of the case that his sojourn in England since that period has in no way been prejudicial to the interests of his constituents, seeing that he has discontinued exercising his former duties, and that while his presence here has been absolutely requisite for the purpose of preparing his case, it has not been altogether unserviceable in various ways to the common cause. In proof of which, under a sense of great esteem for the Deputy, and deeply impressed with the recollection of the important services he has rendered to the public at the expense of his own personal

1. Messieurs Schaub and Vernon.

2. The King of England.

interests, we consider it both a duty and a pleasure to give him this certificate, in the hope that it may be of use to him in his dealings with his constituents and serve as a shield to protect him from the attacks of his enemies.

"Done at London, this 10th of August, 1750.

"J. J. MAJENDIE, Minister of the Savoy and
Chaplain to the Comte de Grantham.

"SAMUEL CODERC, Minister of Castle Street
and Berwick Street.

"ET. ABEL LAVAL, Minister of Castle Street
and Berwick Street.

"I consider myself in duty bound personally to add, after having accompanied the Deputy in the year 1748 into the presence of the First Lord of the Treasury, that we were very cordially received and that, after having pleaded for a renewal of the Royal bounty, we were told that it was unnecessary to solicit a continuance of that which was already assured and placed on a solid footing. And I further affirm that neither at that time nor subsequently has the conduct of the Deputy, or the Deputy himself, been brought into discredit either with the King on any of His Majesty's Ministers.

"J. J. MAJENDIE."

The dispute came to a climax when Du Plan, after having recounted the sacrifices he had imposed upon himself for the good of his brethren, demanded to be compensated for his labours, and to have guaranteed to him a sum sufficient for his wants during the remainder of his days. What demand could be fairer? Had he not willingly given up his inheritance and sacrificed the best part of his life out of love for the Churches? Had he not defrayed the cost of his numerous journeys out of the scanty

sum saved from the wreck of his fortune and the residue of one or two small legacies bequeathed to him by his relatives? And now, when he had been instrumental in enriching the fund at Geneva, was it right that a servant so old and faithful should be allowed to sink into poverty?

Du Plan claimed what he considered to be a fair provision, but the Committee considering his demand excessive, declined to pay it, basing their refusal on his reiterated written statements that he asked nothing of the Churches. To this Du Plan properly replied that although he had never sought remuneration from the Churches which with difficulty maintained themselves, yet it did not follow therefrom that he should not make a claim upon the French Fund at Geneva, a fund which, through his own personal exertions, had been increased to the extent of ten thousand pounds sterling. He declared that he was justified in the request he had made and appealed for support to the testimony of Vial de Beaumont and Polier.

Although at Du Plan's instance it had been agreed in the year 1745 to submit the matter for arbitration, judgment was not finally rendered until 1751. Meanwhile each side prepared its case. Serces drew up an exhaustive indictment in which he displayed all his accustomed spleen against the Deputy, while Antoine Court mixed himself up in the affair by publishing his famous *Statement to the Arbitrators*. Du Plan on his side submitted two separate statements—certified and supported by

accounts and vouchers—after which he confidently awaited the decision of the Arbitrators. This tribunal not alone completely cleared the conscientious Deputy from the slanders of his enemies, and the vindictive calumnies of Seroes, but awarded him a salary of one hundred pounds per annum from the year 1731 to 1751, an immediate payment of three hundred pounds, a deferred payment of four hundred, and for the future a yearly pension of fifty pounds. This rendering, which entirely exonerates Du Plan and places him beyond the shadow of suspicion, is too important to be passed over in silence.

Judgment of the Arbitrators.

“ We, the undersigned Arbitrators, chosen and constituted by the Managers of the French Fund on the one part and by Monsieur Du Plan on the other part, as a tribunal for the investigation of certain differences existing between them as to the claims of M. Du Plan on the French Fund, having thoroughly examined the whole affair down to the minutest detail which might affect the subject, having also duly considered all the various allegations brought forward by the one side and the other, and desiring to terminate the controversy to the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned, the same having pressingly requested as well as fully authorized us so to do, declare our judgment.

“ 1. That M. Du Plan not only has not appropriated, but that it was out of his power to appropriate the sums collected for the Fund, seeing that after he had solicited contributions and obtained promises he did not himself receive the monies, but deputed that duty to persons spe-

cially appointed for the purpose by the Managers, and that consequently these persons appear to us alone responsible, as M. Du Plan had power to deal with the monies only after they had passed through the hands of the Managers or with the previously obtained consent or subsequent approval of the latter, the whole of the said sums being duly accounted for.

" 2. That the accounts in our opinion are sufficiently complete to enable us to arrive at a decision as to the claim set up by M. Du Plan, the nature of his mission being such that we could not insist upon an exact statement of every item of his expenditure, and we have the greater reason to be satisfied with his accounts, seeing that the Managers of the Fund cannot produce theirs, and that apparently their accounts, could they be produced, would show an amount in excess of that claimed by M. Du Plan.

" 3. That owing to unforeseen misfortunes, M. Du Plan finds himself under the necessity of demanding that remuneration to which he was entitled, but which when he left Switzerland he had no intention of demanding, having resolved to bring his outgoings within the limits of his private income, and only to make a claim, if, contrary to the expectation of the Managers, he should be successful in his mission.

" 4. That, owing to the inevitable expenses and incidental contingencies of his long journeys, the dearness of everything in the countries where he sojourned, the extra outlay unavoidable in places of whose language he was ignorant, the heavy disbursements for his correspondence and for the relief of necessitous refugees whom the Managers of the French Fund had commended to his care, the serious illnesses from which he has frequently suffered while travelling and some of which were the results of hardships arising from the narrowness of his resources—in view of all these and other circumstances of like character, M. Du Plan shows great moderation in estimating his expenses, taking one year with another, at one hundred and fifty pounds.

" 5. That as regards the number of years for which M. Du Plan is authorized to seek compensation, we considered him, in July 1750, to have no further claim beyond the time at which he was officially notified that his duties had terminated, that is to say after March 1748, inasmuch as we were under the impression that he remained here out of perverseness; but being since convinced that he had legitimate objects in view and that he even took an active interest on behalf of the Fund, we consider that he has a right to count on compensation from 1731 to the present moment if the finances will admit of it, abating of course the sums already paid to him by the Managers.

" On this basis the amount due to M. Du Plan for a period of twenty years and a half is £3075 which with £222.3, the balance of account for advances made in Copenhagen as drawn up by M. Henri Guinand, makes £3297.3; from this sum has to be deducted £1364.16.4 already received by M. Du Plan from the Managers, leaving £1932.6.8 as balance in his favour.

" But considering that the Fund is not in a condition to bear so heavy a claim, and that M. Du Plan, were he to insist on payment, would destroy the work of his own hands, and as he is fully aware that owing to his zeal and to his having hitherto refrained from making any claim on the Fund, the Managers have been led to incur a greater outlay than they otherwise would have done, devolving upon them as upon himself the necessity of seeking indemnification, we have placed ourselves in his hands, appealing to his disinterested charity and zeal to reduce his claim, so far as he can, to the measure of his actual wants, to which appeal he has favorably responded by making the following solemn declaration.

" That, satisfied with the full recognition of his integrity of purpose, satisfied also with our acknowledgement of the success with which his disinterested zeal has been blessed, and with our desire to meet all his demands so far as the Fund will admit—his honor being thus vindicated and him-

self enabled to serve the cause usefully—satisfied also that we admit his right to a payment at the rate of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, from the year 1731 to the present time, in compensation for the capital he has sacrificed and the interest he would have drawn and would be now receiving were it not for this sacrifice, he is willing to yield everything in his power and has consequently consented not merely to be content with one hundred pounds per annum, but to relinquish the sum of two hundred and seven pounds allowed to him from the proceeds of his collections. He would have been heartily willing also to have given up the balance of seven hundred pounds due to him on like grounds, had he not become responsible for the same to others from whom he had borrowed it for the express purpose of prosecuting his work on behalf of the French Fund; under these circumstances he is reluctantly compelled to ask urgently for a sum of three hundred pounds now actually due by him to third parties, while as to the remaining four hundred pounds he hopes his creditors will give him time and accept instalments of fifty pounds per annum for the ensuing eight years, the agreement to be completed by his executors in case of death, and the whole to be secured on an assignment through M. Pierre Gaussen; but these modifications being effected, and the amount remaining for M. Du Plan being so far diminished as simply to save him from insolvency without affording him means of support, he appeals to our sense of justice and humanity to grant him a pension of fifty pounds per annum to commence from the present moment, trusting that his claim will not appear exorbitant, and that the Managers of the Fund will not be injured or inconvenienced, at all events as long as the Royal grant he has obtained shall be regularly forthcoming.

Impressed with the liberal spirit shown by M. Du Plan in these proposals—written and signed with his own hand—we consider that the same generous impulse which animates him should constrain us to grant his just and moderate demands. In faith of which we have appended our signatures

270 *Du Plan and Court become reconciled to each other.*

to this deed of arbitration, with the special approval of His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, in London, this 20th of October, 1751."

"L. SCHAUB."

"S. VERNON."

Approved "CANTUAR."

It was not until 1752 that Antoine Court and Benjamin Du Plan became once more reconciled after an estrangement of eight years duration. Antoine Court made the first advances, by means of a statement which he addressed to the Arbitrators and wherein he protested the sincerity of his affection for the Deputy. Du Plan at once replied in a long letter, acknowledging that he had been mistaken as to the sentiments of his old friend and asking him to forgive and forget his hastiness and warmth. Peace was thus re-established in the Church and Du Plan continued to fill the office of Deputy in London.

CHAPTER XX.

DU PLAN AND THE GREAT PERSECUTION.

1745—1752.

Notwithstanding the trouble and annoyance created for him by his adversaries, Benjamin Du Plan's interest in the affairs of the Church remained as warm as ever, and although the Synod adversely influenced from both London and Geneva decided

in 1751 to remove him from the office of Deputy, he nevertheless continued his relations with the persecuted Pastors in his native country, while they on their part testified in long and frequent communications full of sympathy their sincere respect for his person and their implicit confidence in his integrity. The times were becoming alarming; thick clouds of darkness were gathering over the heads of the sorely tried Protestants of his Fatherland, persecution was breaking out with redoubled violence and the Pastors knew well enough that if they were compelled to seek refuge in a foreign land they would find in Benjamin Du Plan not a protector merely but a devoted brother and friend, for had not his courage and fidelity emerged with triumph from a fierce and fiery ordeal? But apart from ulterior considerations the letters of Du Plan were a source of precious consolation to Ministers of the gospel who, having scarcely completed their studies at Lausanne, were called upon to undergo severe tribulation; these young recruits in the Church militant were well worthy of the sympathy of the veterans whom age, infirmities or the progress of events had removed from the strife, and who watched from a distance with justifiable pride the courage and tenacity of their devoted successors.

The Intendant Le Nain, who had replaced Bernage, in 1745, in Languedoc, was a hard and cruel man, and the style of his administration recalled that of Baviile of sinister memory. The Province was covered with detachments of dragoons who

were instructed to show no mercy to refractory Protestants. Soldiers were encouraged by their officers to pillage the houses of the suspected, to despoil them of their goods, break open their cupboards, tear up their linen, burst into their cellars, start their wine casks, kill their beasts and fowls, and destroy everything on which they could lay their hands.

Other Provinces were treated in like manner. Gibbets were set up in the Huguenot strongholds of Dauphiny and Vivarais. The young pastor, Louis Ranc, was taken and hanged at Die; the illustrious and respected Jacques Roger—the apostle of Dauphiny and the friend of Du Plan—despite his four score years, was put to the same cruel death at Grenoble, and his aged body, after being suspended for twenty-four hours from the gibbet was dragged naked through the streets and thrown into the river Isère. The young minister Desubas was arrested at Vernoux and taken to Montpellier. During his short ministry he had so won the love and sympathy of his flock, that certain of the faithful, hearing of his imprisonment, would fain have rescued him on the journey, but Paul Rabaut, pastor of Nismes, implored them to abandon an attempt that could only provoke cruel reprisals. Désubas died with Christian fortitude at the age of twenty-six.

About the year 1746, the persecution suddenly abated. France, which had long been at war with England had begun to threaten with her armies the frontiers of Austria and Piedmont. At the same

time the Government became greatly alarmed by a rumour that English emissaries were traversing Languedoc with the intention to instigate a revolt amongst the Protestant population, for an insurrection in the interior would have gravely complicated a situation already sufficiently serious.

The alarm attained its height when the reverses that had befallen our arms in Italy and the invasion of Languedoc by forty thousand Austrian troops were made known. Le Nain received official instructions to assure himself of the loyalty of the Huguenots and to relax the severity of the persecution he had directed against them. For a short time this tolerant policy was continued, but the danger once past, the persecution recommenced with greater virulence than ever.

In 1750 Le Nain ceded his office of Intendant of Languedoc to Saint-Priest, who having been expressly charged rigorously to carry out the Declaration of 1724, quickly proved himself worthy of his instructions and as pitiless as the cruelest of his predecessors. Since the month of November detachments of military had traversed the country, dispersing the numerous assemblies which were wont to meet on week days as well as on Sundays. The gatherings, as a natural consequence, became less frequent and were held in greater secrecy, nevertheless the Tower of Ferrières, the Fort of Brescou, the galleys at Marseilles, and the Château D'If were soon crowded with prisoners. This, however, was but the beginning. In 1751 the new

Intendant of the Province issued an edict forbidding Protestants either to marry or to baptise their children in the Desert. The decree was retrospective as well as prospective, a delay of fifteen days only being granted to parents, in order that they might have their children re-baptised in the parish Churches according to the Catholic ritual. At the expiration of the period the priests were instructed to send to the Intendant a list of the refractory who were forthwith mulcted in heavy fines. Every town and village were occupied by detachments of dragoons or cavalry troopers, who were billeted exclusively upon the householders that refused to submit; the latter were further ordered to pay four *livres* per diem to each soldier; in case of refusal the soldiers were increased in number and remained in possession until all the children had been re-baptised either by fair means or foul. Many of the older children absolutely refused to be taken to the Church and had to be dragged thither by main force; others, patiently accepting their fate, showed by their passionate grief the feelings with which they regarded the outrages inflicted upon them, while others again opposed violence to violence, and made a vigorous resistance, tearing with hands and fingernails the clothes and skin of their captors.¹

In order to strike terror into the hearts of the Protestants, Saint-Priest made examples, in January 1752, of two preachers named François Bénézet, and

1. See *Mémoire Historique*, page 63.

Molines, alias Fléchier, whom he had caused to be arrested. The former submitted to death with admirable fortitude at Montpellier, but the latter, unmanned at the sight of the scaffold, made feigned recantation, and was taken to the College at Viviers; after a time he was set at liberty, and ultimately emigrating to Amsterdam, he was received into the Church and allowed a pension by the Consistory, but suffered for the remainder of his life poignant anguish and remorse. A Protestant of the name of Roques of Beauvoisin, falsely accused of having attempted the life of a military officer, was also executed.

These executions spread consternation throughout the Provinces of the South; the villages became depopulated, men, women and children flying before the approach of the dragoons, until at last harried and persecuted beyond endurance, some of the more fiery spirits among the Huguenots made reprisals by attempting the lives of the priests, whom they regarded, not without reason, as the chief cause of their troubles. The Prior of Ners, riding towards Vézénobres, encountered two armed preachers. He had hardly passed them when he was struck by a musket-ball and fell, grievously wounded, from his horse. On the night of the same day the Curé of Quillan was suddenly roused from his sleep by repeated knocking at his door. He rose, opened the window, and looked out, when he was hit by a bullet and mortally wounded. The next day the Curé of Logrian returning from Quissac was stopped,

maltreated and left for dead, his assailants being three men, who had been lying in wait for him in ambush. There can be no doubt that the authors of these crimes were Protestants, but the only one of them who was identified was Coste, the man who had fired at the Prior of Ners.

When these occurrences became known the Curés of the Province showed great alarm; some left their homes and took refuge with the bishop, while priests of every rank magnified these isolated cases for the purpose of creating terror and inciting the Catholic populace to revenge.

"The rebels, six hundred in number, are at our gates;" wrote the Prior of Gajan to the Indendant, "they are secreted in the wood of Saint-Bénézet, and their leaders are Defferre and Coste. We have urgent need of a strong force, as several Curés have been either killed or wounded. Unless you send troops to Saint-Mamert, Fons, Gajan, Rouvière and Montaignac, and augment the number of those already stationed at Saint Geniès and La Calmette, all the priests and Catholics of the locality will share the same fate."¹

Saint-Priest employed Lédignan to hunt the minister Coste, and it was publicly announced that whosoever gave him shelter should be hung; but in vain! Coste concealed himself for some time, and finally succeeded by the aid of his friends in escaping to England where he was received and supported by Du Plan. The Tribunal of Nismes tried him in his absence and condemned

1. Archives of Herault, C. 234.

him by default to be broken alive on the wheel and burnt at the stake.

These alarming attempts, and the still more alarming rumours of an approaching general assassination of priests, greatly affected the Government and the Intendant, the latter of whom feared that the Huguenots in their desperation would stop at nothing. Saint-Priest besought the intervention of Paul Rabaut with a view to calm the minds of the Protestants, and bring them back to their obedience, while at the same time the military relaxed their rigorous measures, and general quiet was again restored.

It was about this time that the Duc de Richelieu arrived in Languedoc to take command of the troops. To the surprise of the Protestants he began his official career by a display of great toleration, which was attributed to the influence of the Marquis De Paulmy, then on a tour in Languedoc, in order, it was supposed, to ascertain the condition of that important province. The Protestants, however, were mistaken, for the object of Paulmy was only to make a military inspection of the defensive works of the south, specially those situated on the Rhone and the Var. A dramatic incident which marked the tour of the Marquis made a great sensation. He arrived at Nismes just as the persecution was becoming less severe, but when the country was still deeply agitated. In astonishment at this condition of affairs, he expressed a desire to have a statement of the same submitted to him by

the Protestants themselves. Happening shortly after to be going one night from Nismes to Montpellier, his travelling carriage was stopped by some men on horse-back, one of whom approached the door with a respectful demeanour and said "I am Paul Rabaut." He then handed the Marquis a long document of which he requested his perusal. The old soldier, evidently touched by the display of so much courage and confidence on the part of the pastor, accepted the statement and promised to forward it to the King. Shortly afterwards the persecution entirely ceased, a result which the Protestants naturally attributed to the influence of the Marquis De Paulmy with the Court. Alas, it was nothing of the kind!—the true reason was owing neither to pity nor to mercy, but "to paucity of troops to enforce the laws and to punish those who broke them."¹

This persecution, which lasted for seven years, was the longest and most terrible that the Huguenots had yet undergone. The respite was of short duration—only a year—but they profited by it to combine and organise themselves anew.

Let us now listen to the plaintive description of the sorrows of the victims, as portrayed in the following correspondence.

1. *Histoire de l'Eglise de Montpellier*, by M. Corbière. Documentary evidence, No. 41, November, 1751.

Letter from Cortiez, 1750.

"Upper Languedoc, the 18th of May, 1750.

"Monsieur and dear brother,

"I received with true pleasure your pious letter dated the 9th of April last Since your departure our Churches have considerably increased in number as well as in influence; they have been organised into eight separate Provinces, namely Dauphiny, Vivarais, Upper and Lower Cevennes, Upper and Lower Languedoc, Upper Guienne and Comté de Foix, Upper and Lower Poitou, Saintonge, and Normandy. Each Province embraces about the same extent of country as it did before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; it has its Pastors, Consistories, Conferences and Synods, and follows out, as far as the circumstances of the times will permit, the rules and regulations established by our forefathers.

"In Dauphiny during the last few years, the persecution has been very severe and has made great ravages, but, blessed be God, I learn that latterly it has somewhat abated

"As to Vivarais, you have doubtless heard of the disastrous events that took place on the occasion of the capture of the late M. Désubas, who suffered martyrdom with a faith and constancy worthy of the martyrs of the primitive church, and with a patience and fortitude extremely edifying to the faithful. But, everlasting praise be to God, these tribulations were not of long duration; the assemblies, baptisms, and marriages were soon resumed as formerly and are even daily increasing in number

"In Upper and Lower Cevennes and in Lower Languedoc, things are in a much healthier condition. There, nearly all the Protestants profess their religion openly without fear of molestation; they attend with great regularity the frequent assemblies, held in broad daylight, in close vicinity to cities,

towns, and villages, and at which baptisms are performed and marriages solemnized.

"In Upper Languedoc numerous assemblies are held, while baptisms and marriages are frequent, but unfortunately everything has to be done at night time, heavy fines being imposed in case of discovery. Some Protestants, in consequence, cannot be prevailed upon to make open profession of their faith

"In Upper Guienne, towards the end of 1744 and the commencement of 1745, the assemblies became much more frequent, but renewed and severe persecution soon compelled their discontinuance, and during several subsequent years the faithful were cruelly oppressed by the agents of the Government.

"Owing, however, to the loving kindness of God and His ever watchful care of His children, the bitterness of the persecution is now over-past and the much tried Huguenots are beginning to enjoy some repose. The Pastor tells me in the last letter I received from him that he has recently baptized four children and performed several marriages without interruption from our adversaries, and he hopes that if God favors them with a few weeks cessation of anxiety he may have many more similar duties to perform.

"In the Comté de Foix the people of God have suffered much by reason of many fines imposed upon them, by imprisonment, by condemnation to servitude on the galleys, by the carrying away of young girls into convents, and by the compulsory baptism of children previously baptised in the Desert.

"These measures caused at the time of their inception a momentary panic, but I have since learned with indescribable satisfaction that their stringency has abated and that baptisms and marriages in the Desert would be resumed when a Pastor is appointed, which will soon be done.

"In Upper and Lower Poitou, Saintonge and Perigord the persecution of last year created some trouble and confusion, but it was not of long duration, and tranquillity is

now restored. An unfortunate schism which began with the chiefs and spread amongst the flocks has been repaired. M. Du Plan has informed you that one result of the fourteen or fifteen marriages in the Desert in Perigord has been the condemnation of the men to the galleys and the imprisonment of the women for life, but I have since heard that these sentences have been commuted into exile for a term of years.

"Touching Normandy, I am but imperfectly informed as to what happens there. I only know that the assemblies are very large, that Monsieur Préneuf, who was the Pastor, has left for Jersey where he has been made sub-deacon according to the rites of the Anglican Church, and that, previous to his departure, at a conference, he laid hands on a certain M. Gautier, formerly a monk, and who is well spoken of.

"You have without doubt heard that the king of France has thought proper to impose the tax known as the *vingtième* upon his subjects. This proceeding has produced considerable opposition in certain Provinces, but especially in Languedoc, and it has gone to such lengths that the King, surprised and indignant, has ordered the suppression of the Provincial Assemblies (*états provinciaux*) and the functions formerly performed by these bodies are now assumed by the agents of the crown.

"The payment of the impost in question has been demanded of us Protestants by the Intendant, and we have neither the right nor the power to demur to the request, though we know perfectly well that compliance therewith will bring us into conflict with the clergy and draw upon us the ill-will of many of our neighbours opposed to the constitution of the Provincial Councils, and the sentiments of the Clergy will only draw down upon us the hatred of both. We have yielded, for obvious reasons, as quietly as possible, and our acknowledgment of submission has been well received, as we learn from the deputation of Elders who were appointed to convey it to Monsieur the Intendant; we

understood, besides, that as a result of the interview fines and imprisonments will cease to be imposed upon persons attending the assemblies; at all events, since its occurrence, fines have not been levied, while many of the faithful have been let out of prison. We have also forwarded an act of submission on the subject of (*illegible*) to M. de Saint Florentin, whom we have requested to make the King acquainted with our real sentiments. God grant that this proceeding may have the hoped-for result, and that the cruel edicts issued against us may be revoked; that we may soon see the exiles return to their homes, the galley slaves (who notwithstanding the liberation of a few are still numerous) set free, and the children wrongfully detained in convents restored to their parents. We have, however, to apprehend trouble in the future, seeing that we are in such a minority, and that the Clergy are constantly working against us and endeavouring to bring about our ruin; because our love for God and zeal for His service are at such a low ebb, and because, in a word, our sins and back-slidings are so many and so great. Considering that we stand in pressing need of the prayers of our brethren to God, and their intervention with the Protestant Powers, we humbly ask them both for the one and for the other and beseech them to obtain the assistance of all who are able to render us service. I am very sincerely, Monsieur and dear brother in our Lord Jesus Christ, your very humble servant

"CORTIEZ."

Letter from Le Marechal to Benjamin Du Plan (1752).

"Monsieur and dear Cousin,

"Since our friend Dubon and I last wrote to you, some disastrous events have transpired. The Government farmer-generals have confiscated all the property belonging to Protestant refugees now abroad, among which is that

belonging to you and to your late aunt, as well as the house and appurtenances sold by you to our friend Dubon.

"A month since, persecution recommenced; the men arrested at the religious assemblies have been condemned to the galleys, the women to the Tower of Constance and their goods have been placed under confiscation. In certain localities the troops have been ordered to compel the re-baptism of children, while marriages have been forcibly re-solemnized by the priests.

"M. Bénézet, a student lately taken by the dragoons at Vigan, was put to death on the 26th of March last, at Montpellier, glorifying God by the courage and firmness with which he yielded up his life. About the same time Le sieur Molines, surnamed Fléchier, who had been several years in the ministry, was seized at Marsillargues; he had married a Catholic lady, the widow of an officer, and, in his passionate love for this woman, had shown by yielding to her evil influence, that it is given to none to serve both God and the flesh, for though he attended mass he was long kept a prisoner in the Citadel of Montpellier. God grant us grace and strength to be faithful to Him unto the end. I present to your dear wife my sincerest respects, and of her as well as of yourself I have the honor to be, Monsieur and dear cousin, your very humble servant

"LE MARECHAL."

"14th of May, 1752."

*Letter of Redonnel, Pastor of Montpellier,
to Benjamin Du Plan (1751).*

"Monsieur and honored brother,

"Although several months have elapsed since I wrote to you very fully, during which time I have received no reply to my letter, I address you again in order to assure you that in addition to the constant and earnest prayers I offer to God on your behalf, I have not failed to renew them at the

commencement of this new year, to the end that if it please God He may bestow upon you everything that is desirable, both for this life and for that which is to come; and not alone as an evidence of the high estimation which I entertain for you, but also with a view to inform you of everything that has transpired here respecting us in the meantime.

"Towards the end of the month of October last, two Protestants of Faugères were apprehended for having refused to allow the priest to bury their children, they having meanwhile buried the children in their own grounds. A few months' imprisonment and payment of twenty five or thirty *pistoles* was the penalty imposed for this affair. Some time afterwards, Monsieur the sub-delegate of Béziers, appointed for the purpose by the Intendant, went at the head of a brigade of mounted police to the aforesaid Faugères, also to Bédarieux and Graissessac, for the purpose of ascertaining the names of those who had been married or had had their children baptized in the Desert, and of taking away from them the certificates of such marriages and baptisms. This measure, following the publication of the decree of which I spoke in my last letter, so alarmed the faithful as to make them fear that they would at once be condemned to the prisons and the galleys, but most of all they feared that the marriages performed by their own legitimate pastors would be held void, and re-solemnization as well as re-baptism at the hands of the priests be enforced by the authorities. I had just returned from a visit to the Churches when I heard this news, and appreciating their anxiety I wrote them two letters (being unable either to go back myself or to send any one else) in order to encourage them, as well as to exhort them to persevere in the faith and to lose and suffer all things rather than to commit any act incompatible with their duty or to the prejudice of their salvation. I have since heard from one who has visited them that our adversaries have made no further demonstration, and that tranquillity is now restored.

" While these things were going on in the outskirts of the

Province where no troops are stationed, assemblies in the interior were constantly assailed by the many armed detachments appointed for that purpose. All our gatherings on one day were attacked and dispersed by the united forces from all the garrisons of the Province. Not a single prisoner, however, was taken at any place with the exception of Uzes, where the number was so great that it seemed large enough for all the others put together.

"The following are the particulars. The Assembly connected with the Church met together at the usual trysting place, which is barely a league from the town. The Commandant of the garrison and the sub-delegate, bribed and led on by the bishop, who is extremely bigoted and cruel, had laid a plan for surprising the worshippers and taking as many of them prisoners as possible, and, above all M. Pradel, alias Vernezobre the Pastor. The sub-delegate having ordered a brigade of mounted police stationed at Remoulin to muster in the neighbourhood of Uzes, but not until the Sunday morning, in order to avoid attracting attention, put himself at their head, and in company with the foot police drew near to the meeting, after having first provided the men with cords and manacles wherewith to bind the minister whom he hoped to capture.

"The Commandant on the other hand, in order the better to put the assembly off its guard, ordered the garrison out on to the Esplanade as if for ordinary drill, having meanwhile adopted the treacherous device of sending his valet-de-chambre to the meeting to watch the Pastor, and ascertain what became of him on the approach of the detachment, in order to insure his capture. The admission of the valet-de-chambre to the assembly ought not to surprise you, neither ought it to be regarded as an imprudent act on the part of the Church. For the last ten years our gatherings have taken place in the day-time without concealment, and not only have many Catholics, but soldiers and police officers also, attended them out of curiosity or other motives, and notwithstanding the opposition of the bishops, priests and

commandants these proceedings have not been entirely discontinued. Moreover the Spaniards, so many of whom have been spending the winter in the Province, have attended the assemblies in crowds, and though for the most part they understand very little French they have so greatly admired the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the sermons, the singing of the Psalms, and above all our liturgies, our administration of the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, that at Uzes several officers who attended an assembly one Sunday occupied seats in the enclosure with the Consistory, in order the better to see the baptisms and hear the minister. They were so impressed that they afterwards exclaimed with delight that we baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost and that we were Christians like themselves. Their attention to, and respect for the worship were redoubled, and they knelt and covered their heads like the faithful, while I am able to assure you that the few who have returned into Spain are very different from what they were when they came away, preferring generally communion with our body to communion with the Catholics and our preachings to their masses. Some have gone so far as to denounce the priests, and especially the monks, charging them with improper conduct, and this without producing any disturbance in our assemblies. I have gone somewhat at length into these matters in the belief that the incident of the valet-de-chambre and the particulars about the Spaniards, —the two subjects being somewhat connected,—may not improbably afford you as much pleasure as they have afforded us.

“To return to the traitor valet and the assembly. So far from any one objecting to his presence the worshippers seemed to derive pleasure in procuring him a good place, the better to see and hear what should happen. The project of the Bishop had not been arranged with such secrecy that the Church did not suspect what was going on, the artifice of exercising the men being well understood. On coming together two precautions were taken; one was that the

Pastor dispensed with his robes in order that he might be the better able to escape from the troops—simply wearing the ecclesiastical bands, as he had to baptise three infants—the other was to place certain of the faithful in the town as scouts to warn the assembly of the approach of the soldiers. This, however, was a useless proceeding, for while the troops were apparently engaged in their manœuvres, the Commandant by a pre-arranged plan caused them to proceed rapidly or to run in companies of fourteen (eight or nine in number) towards the assembled worshippers. The faithful, who were on the look-out observing what was going on, ran also, and with the greatest speed possible, but the soldiers—and the mounted police who joined them on the way—made such progress that all arrived nearly at the same time; and before it was possible to give the signal of danger, the assembly was in this way invested by a cordon of troops, which contracted its area until there was left only one small opening, and this a few grenadiers tried to close up. To the honor of the Church let it be said that the startled flock, disregarding the impending peril, made the safety of its Pastor and a young preacher who had just recovered from a severe illness, and was still only convalescent, its sole concern. The latter fainted away and was with difficulty mounted on horseback behind the Pastor, who endeavoured to make his escape through the small opening in question. One of the most striking instances afforded us in ecclesiastical history of the attachment of people for their Pastor is shown in the fact that when these persecuted ones saw that the grenadiers were about to attain their object they threw themselves into the hands of the soldiers in order to distract their attention and give the Pastor a chance to get away. The plan was completely successful, and for once we see the sheep not only giving their property and their liberty, but also their lives for the shepherd who thus, through the special intervention of Providence for which we ever desire to return thanks, made his escape. It was not so with the faithful, for, although the greater part saved themselves,

a large number were exposed for three hours to the ill-usage and insolence of the soldiers and police, as well as to that of the Commandant, who by his example and exhortation encouraged his subordinates to inflict upon their unhappy victims the most outrageous insults and the roughest treatment. Amongst the victims was an old man of seventy, of the name of Audiger, and another, called Espérandieu, both of Montaren who, when felled to the ground by heavy blows from the fists of their oppressors, contented themselves with protesting against this brutality by the simple exclamation, "Be merciful to us for the sake of God, for we have done you no injury!" At this moment, a soldier who had injured his gun, probably by letting it fall on a rock of which there are many in the locality, drew the attention of the Commandant (who happened to be passing) to the circumstance and accused one of the poor old men of having done the mischief. The Commandant who saw his helpless and aged victim lying prostrate on the ground covered with bruises and half dead, could scarcely have believed such a story; nevertheless he replied with an oath that the old man ought to be killed, and having kicked him on the chest with his heavy boot ordered him to be confined with the other prisoners.

"You will no doubt wonder what became of the valet-de-chambre. On the approach of his master he attempted, but without success, to point out the Pastor in order that he might claim the thousand crowns reward offered for his capture. God meanwhile had ordained the seizure of a man who resembled the former; and the Commandant, under the belief that he had his man safe in his custody, took no further steps. The Pastor thus made his escape in company with the others, who were followed for about a mile by the troops.

"As it was winter time and the days were short, the troops were soon recalled from the chase. In their eagerness to pursue, capture and ill-treat the Huguenots, many of them had dispersed through the woods and among the mountains, and they now returned with the unfortunates whom they had succeeded in taking prisoners. The number of the unhappy

captives now was so great that, not only was there a difficulty in guarding them, but it was feared that an attempt at resistance would be made, and that those of their brethren who had made their escape might come to their rescue. God had caused our adversaries to believe that we should be more resentful than we really were, and to this apprehension, which was rather servicable to us than otherwise, is to be attributed two incidents that greatly surprised the assembly at the time of their occurrence and which I have omitted previously to notice. One was the beating of the drum, and the other the firing of a few blank cartridges in the air, apparently with the object of so frightening us as to induce the strong and vigorous to effect their escape, while the Pastor, the women and the old people were made an easy prey. The stratagem, however, did not succeed, and the troops were encumbered with such a multitude of prisoners that many of them easily got away, whilst others bribed the soldiers with money and jewellery to allow them to escape. On approaching the town, the Commandant, either simply from fear and a desire to irritate the Catholics against us by inducing them to believe that we were likely to give trouble, or else with a view to secure the prisoners, of whom many were constantly escaping, and to render his success the more striking, ordered out the remainder of the garrison under arms. Be this as it may, he entered the town at the head of the reinforcement, escorting by the light of torches about two hundred Huguenots whom he conducted to the prison. You may judge from this fact the enormous number that might have been secured. Two ladies of quality were especially distinguished by their gentle and resolute bearing. I am acquainted with the name of one only, the pious Madame d'Aubessargues. It is with little pleasure that I recount to you the impression which this sad spectacle made on the minds and hearts of nearly all the inhabitants, whether Protestants or Catholics. There were but few respectable people who could not reckon among the prisoners some relative, acquaintance, neighbour or friend,

and the lamentations were not limited to a section of the community as, possibly, the Commandant had anticipated, but were reinforced by the maledictions of the Catholics who in this made common cause with their oppressed neighbours.

"As the prisons of Uzès were not sufficient to contain so many persons at one time, and as no preparations had been previously made or could now be made at so short notice, the wretched accomodation received by these poor, hungry, cold, tired and maltreated people added not a little to their already sufficiently severe sufferings. Amongst them were five women with infants at the breast, who were not allowed, even under guard, to go to their homes, and only permitted by special favor to receive their infants in the prison. Madame D'Aubessargues begged (under the guarantee of a Catholic, who had tendered his help) that she might be allowed to be kept prisoner in a private house—watched by as many soldiers as should be deemed necessary, and whom she herself offered to pay. This was granted, and soon afterwards she was permitted to occupy her own Château, on condition that she provided sureties and paid the guard. The most notable of the other prisoners also obtained their freedom, under recognisances, for reasons which you will be pleased to hear and for which we cannot fail to admire the workings of Providence. I will confine myself to two of the principal cases.

"God, who never abandons those whom He loves, so over-ruled events that M. de la Fareille, Commandant of Uzès, happened to be absent at the time when this affair occurred, and vexed to find that the troops had been ordered out without his authority, shewed his displeasure in a very marked manner to the sub-Delegate and the officer in command, as well, perhaps, as to some others. This alone was very much in our favor, and coupled with it was the fact that M. the Duke d'Uzès, so far from regarding the imprisonment favorably, seriously regretted it. It is asserted that, on the day following, when the sub-Delegate

called upon him—possibly for the purpose of justifying his conduct—the Seigneur angrily demanded whether he wished him to be deprived of his vassals. He also ordered the sub-Delegate to quit the Duchy at once and never to re-enter it under pain of the lash, and concluded by expressing surprise that he had not already lost his life. Thus, no doubt, it is in great measure owing to the favor of this nobleman that our brethren at Uzès are indebted for the amelioration of their misfortunes, if it be permitted to speak thus of sufferings endured for righteousness sake.

“The above named considerations have not operated so favorably as regards the poorer prisoners, and especially those who have to maintain themselves and their families by their own industry. The hope of inducing them to violate their consciences through the weariness and misery incidental to a sojourn in prison and the wants of their families, has encouraged our enemies to keep them in close confinement; and the Church of Uzès, fearing the consequences of a design so nefarious and cruel, has done everything in its power to avert the evil by ministering to the wants both of the prisoners and their families. With so many mouths to feed, however, and especially after the late disastrous affair, it has been compelled to appeal for assistance to other Churches, and the appeal has been met by Nîmes sending two hundred *livres*, Montpellier one hundred and fifty, with a promise of more if required, and I know not what the other Churches have done.

“Bad as this is, however, it is not the worst. Many who had been released under bail have been recalled, and handed over to the tender mercies of their enemies, greatly to the disgrace of several persons in high places who had pledged their word for their safety. Monsieur the Intendant, who died on the 28th of last month, signalled his departure from the world by condemning five of these unfortunates to the galleys, two to the Tower of Constance, and thirty-five to the prisons of Nîmes for six months. As to the fate of the others we are ignorant, but we do know that the chief of police

pronounced these sentences on parting with his confessor and before receiving the communion. Can any greater service be rendered to humanity than to convert them from a religion dishonoring alike Christianity and mankind? What an inducement is offered to those who love the Lord to engage in efforts for the utter extinction of Popery!

"Many other facts could I communicate, but observing from one of your letters that M. Viala will probably call upon me and, knowing that you desire full details of all that happens here, I will ask you to excuse me saying more at present, especially as I have filled my sheet of paper. I will continue to send you all the news. I forward to the Upper and Lower Cevennes, to Vivarais and Dauphiny in accordance with the request of M. Viala, the announcement of his proposed visit. While thanking you for your letter I conclude by commending our flocks, my colleagues and myself to your devout prayers, and to the prayers of all who interest themselves on our behalf, assuring you that I am with all my heart, Monsieur and honored brother, your very humble, obedient, and devoted servant

"REDONNEL."

"P. S. My colleagues, with whom I have been in company recently, humbly salute you and thank you for the marks of good-will displayed towards them in the letter brought to me by Michel. If Monsieur Gaussen would oblige us by sending your letters through the hands of his nephew at Montpellier, the transit would be a very safe one. I beseech you to present to him my respects."

Another letter from Redonnel to Du Plan.

"29th of June, 1752.

"Monsieur and honored brother in Jesus Christ,

"A few days have elapsed since I received from Monsieur pastor Polier a letter containing the same intelligence that

you communicated to me some months ago, and although the daily increasing misfortunes which afflict us so engross my attention that I can scarcely think of anything else, yet I must not omit to thank you for your exhortations to us to be at peace with one another. Monsieur, the pastor follows in your steps and goes still further, endeavouring to remove all the obstacles hitherto encountered in our efforts for the attainment of so desirable a consummation, by declaring that he no longer holds to his former views, but that he acquiesces in the favorable judgment which has been rendered in your case.¹ How much troublesome litigation and discord might have been avoided if matters could have been arranged amicably! But such is human nature, it is only to be convinced after long and diligent enquiry. The termination of the dispute fills me with joy and consolation, and gratitude to God, for I can assure you, Monsieur, that neither you nor our other friends are aware of the sorrow with which it has been regarded by my colleagues and myself, nor can you realize the earnestness of our efforts to restore peace and unity. To this good end we would try to forget all that has happened, all uncharitable thoughts and unkind words, and we entreat you to do the same; and knowing as you do our anxiety on this score (as to which your last letter affords convincing testimony), we say no more, feeling assured that all impartial people who know us well will render on this occasion the justice due to our integrity of purpose.

"I will now inform you of what is taking place here. Our faithful are still urged to have their children re-baptized, unfortunately with only too much success, and although imprisonment is not threatened—as this would frighten the people out of the country—yet if, after the lapse of three days, the ceremony has not been performed, troopers are billeted on the recusants; and the latter, besides having to maintain both soldiers and horses, are mulcted in the sum of

1. Allusion is here made to the Arbitration case.

four *livres* each per diem. Those who endeavour to evade the law by not presenting themselves, or their wives and children, have their goods confiscated, and, arbitrary as this proceeding is, it is not the worst that they have to undergo, for they are constantly exposed to the whiles and seductions of the cowardly as well as to the stratagems of Papists and satellites of the priests. The latter, under cover of the authority of their chiefs, are the most insolent and unscrupulous creatures it is possible to imagine, and, united with the rest, they constitute a force with which it is almost impossible for our terrified faithful successfully to contend for the protection of their children. One of my colleagues, who is an eye witness, tells me, in order to afford an idea of the pressure exercised, that the devil himself would have to submit to re-baptism if such was their wish. In three districts Desert-married couples have had to suffer re-marriage at the hands of the priests, and to undergo the tests ordained by the bishops, who, profiting by the restraint thus imposed have neglected nothing to enforce full observance of all the obligations of their religion. Nismes, although hitherto free from these troubles, is daily expecting to suffer, but Sommières, Calvisson, and the neighbourhood, have been attacked, and the inhabitants, with the exception of a few who have elected to surrender their property, were forced to succumb. Our flocks, save a few worldlings, have seriously contemplated expatriating themselves, but alas, even this resource is not now open to them! seven persons were arrested about two or three weeks since, a day's journey from Nismes, and conducted to the dungeons of the fort, while twenty-one were, at the same time, imprisoned in the Fort of Grenoble, and their fate remains unknown. We are assured that all the frontiers of the kingdom are rigorously guarded and that it is useless to attempt to escape. If this be true what is to become of us? Who is to save us from the imminent peril which menaces us and our beloved flocks from all quarters? Can anything be

more fearful? They will neither allow us to remain unmolested nor let us depart.

"Another circumstance still more striking and grievous was the execution, last Friday at Nismes, of a man named Roque from Beauvoisin, a place situated about two leagues from that town. This unfortunate man was accused of having attacked singlehanded a detachment of forty or fifty soldiers as they were escorting seven prisoners who had been captured at an assembly, and he was charged further with attempting the life of the Commandant. False and destitute of all semblance of reality as was this accusation, Roque was thrown into prison, and after a detention at Nismes or Montpellier of four months, was brought up for trial last Thursday at Nismes, manacled with thirty pounds' weight of iron fetters on his neck and wrists. He asserted his innocence, reproached his judges with injustice and threatened them with the vengeance of the Almighty, but deaf alike to remonstrance and menace they sentenced him to be hanged on the following day. No fewer than eighteen priests went in a body to endeavour to prevail on the condemned man to recant. He sternly refused to hear them. The abbot Bouira, more ardent in the cause than his companions, seized the prisoner by the collar and besought him to reflect that in two hours he would have to appear before God, assuring him at the same time that if he quitted the world a heretic he could expect no other fate than to be cast into hell. 'Ah Monsieur!' replied Roque in patois, 'if you believed there to be a hell in the next world, you would not persecute me as you are doing in this!' These words, which coming from a poor peasant were regarded as something monstrous and portentous, struck terror into the whole assemblage, and they shortly afterwards retired, but only to give place to two Jesuits, one of whom (Father Gouët) had come specially from Montpellier. The victim put these new tormentors also to confusion by exclaiming: 'Oh, how can I believe your religion to be true while I daily see you steeping your hands in Christian blood?' A dozen priests

then came up to the charge, but he refused their services, dismissing them with these words. 'Leave me alone to prepare for death, I have no need of consolation from you; unfortunately those who could give me comfort are not permitted to come here.' The fatal moment having arrived, two Jesuits volunteered to accompany the prisoner, and from time to time on his way to the scaffold they endeavoured to address him, but their efforts were useless; Roque heeded them not, and, turning his back, refused in strong terms to give ear to their exhortations. During the short intervals in which he was left to himself he never ceased to cry to God, exclaiming, 'Be merciful to me, be merciful to me!' When the cortege had passed out of the little gate of Saint-Gilles, and came in sight of the gallows, Roque increased his pace, and on arriving implored the executioner to do his work quickly. While mounting the ladder he sang the fifty-first Psalm, and after he had refused to kiss the crucifix offered to him by a Jesuit, the drums were sounded and the drop fell.

"Let us adore the hand of Providence as shewn in this instance of self sacrifice for the truth by Roque, which seems all the greater beside the unworthy conduct of his pastor (Molines) who, as I have already explained to you, saved his life at the expense of his conscience. What a humiliating example of wisdom without piety! Roque was about thirty years of age, and leaves behind him a widow and a little child three or four years old, besides an aged mother, all of whom were at Nismes on that sad but glorious day. In the absence of the pastors, who were obliged to conceal themselves, the family received the ministrations of the deacons and deaconesses who ably supplied their places. The incident has seriously increased the alarm of the residents in Nismes and the neighbourhood, an alarm which was already only too great; and meanwhile the animosity manifested towards us by the priests and those in authority over them shows no signs of abatement. They who are apparently the most forbearing do not scruple to act as spies and to inform against us, and how many are there who fail

to take pleasure in joining the hue and cry? Such is the disastrous result of this Catholic Jubilee!

"I forgot to mention that when Roque was being led from the Fort to the Court of Justice an enthusiastic Huguenot addressing him, cried out, 'Courage, my dear brother, you will shortly be in the presence of the Lord.' No sooner was the body of the martyr hung in chains than it was carried off. Proceedings have been instituted against those who were concerned in its removal. Two sick Protestants—one at Caulon, a small village near Bédarieux, and the other at Pézénas—after having been vainly entreated by the priests to abjure their religion, died, when their bodies were dragged through the streets and thrown into the common sewer. You may judge from these circumstances what is our present condition and the nature of the people with whom we have to deal.

"Excuse all imperfections in my letter; I have written it hastily, and time fails me to add more. I beseech you to remember me in your prayers, and likewise to solicit for me the prayers of your friends. Believe me, Monsieur, and honored brother, with tender and respectful affection, your very humble and obedient servant.

"REDONNEL."

Letter from Pomaret, Pastor of Ganges to

Benjamin Du Plan (1752).

"Monsieur and honored brother,

"Had I not been already convinced of your zeal for the welfare of our oppressed Churches and of your sympathy for us in our misfortunes, the letter you have done me the honor to write would have fully reassured me. I received it with all the greater pleasure, as, since receiving my appointment to the holy ministry, I have earnestly desired to maintain a correspondence with you, being persuaded that

for a man like myself, fulfilling a career beset with so many difficulties, nothing could be more encouraging. Favour me, I beg of you, with the benefit of your frequent counsel; it affords me inexpressible satisfaction, and the consolation I derive therefrom inspires me with a lively sense of gratitude.

"The prophecies of which you speak, and whose teachings your pen so faithfully and so forcibly renders, have been the frequent subject of my meditations and have given me the hope of one day witnessing the deliverance of our Jerusalem, a deliverance that may be accomplished perhaps sooner than many have anticipated. But whether these, our hopes, be realized or not, I am confident that the cause for which we contend will not be less dear to our hearts, and that the greater our sufferings for righteousness' sake in this kingdom where so great efforts are made for its utter destruction the more glorious will it be for us in that day when God shall reward the labours of his beloved servants.

"These thoughts have so impressed my mind, and so influenced my whole course of action, that, notwithstanding the late violent persecutions—so severe in my own district—I should if possible have been only more mindful of my flock, if the devices adopted for my protection from the incessant pursuit of the soldiers had not suddenly and unexpectedly failed, and even then I only withdrew from my labours in the Church until the violence of our enemies seemed somewhat to have abated. I say 'seemed to have abated,' for, in spite of the tranquillity enjoyed by our brethren and countrymen elsewhere, my district, comprizing the village and neighbourhood of Ganges, is constantly exposed to attack. On the fifth of last month, an assembly presided over by one of my assistants was surprised by a detachment of thirty soldiers, and several of the worshippers were captured, although they were shortly afterwards released. On the twenty-seventh, another detachment, numbering about eighty men, set out for the purpose of attacking one of my assemblies, but fortunately they did not succeed

in discovering our place of meeting, thanks to the measures I had taken to provide against snares and betrayals.

"The reasons, my dear Sir, why my flock does not enjoy such tranquillity as is nearly everywhere else enjoyed, are, in the first place, that my parish is in the diocese of the Bishop of Montpellier, a prelate who is described as extremely bigoted and badly disposed towards the Protestants; secondly, that the troops at Ganges are commanded by a man who appears to take a malicious delight in annoying us; and thirdly, that the Protestants of Ganges were so weak as to yield at once to the demand of the priests to have their children re-baptized, thus placing themselves under a yoke from which I had been instrumental in freeing them. I had emphatically warned them of the evil consequences which their falling away would entail, but the menaces of our enemies prevailed over my censures and entreaties. The misfortunes which I had foreseen would happen if they did not remain firm in their faith have come to pass, and I am constrained to apply to them the words of the Prophet Hosea Ch. V, v. 11, '*Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment because he willingly walked after the commandment*' of Jeroboam, Omri, and Ahab. This they believe, and believing they lament.

"If you should honour me with further letters, I pray you to enlarge somewhat on the sin committed by the Protestants amongst us who permit their children to be baptised and their marriages to be solemnised by priests of the Roman Communion, and upon the obligation under which they lay to have those rites celebrated by ministers of their own religion. You will confer an additional favor if you will mention that on this point you are in full accord with the pastors of London. I have very little doubt that such is the case at least as regards the majority of them, more especially since we received the eloquent letter that M. Bourdillon was good enough to send us, and which, when I read it in the presence of my assemblies, produced an excellent effect. This which I ask of you, and whose

purport I shall make known to my flock, will help me to strengthen the wavering faith of some and rekindle the lukewarmness of others, for counsel that comes to us from foreign lands is received by our people with marked respect.

"I have been for some time acquainted with the high qualities of M. Buscarlet, to whom kindly offer my respectful compliments. My recollections of the faithful Arnaud are of the pleasantest, and I am delighted to know that he is in a free country. Give him, I pray, my kind regards, etc.

"POMARET."

"December 1st, 1752."

"The address of M. Fontane, citizen of Anduze, is to be relied upon, and you may safely use it.

"I have this moment been informed that soldiers were yesterday in ambush near a place at which I preached at nine o'clock the same evening. A few minutes later and I should have been arrested."

Another letter from Pomaret to Benjamin du Plan (1572).

"Monsieur,

"M. Buscarlet's letter has reached me here in the Cevennes, where I have been staying for about a month. The sentiments therein expressed are very flattering to me and do me too much honour. I am deeply sensible of your kindness in sending your address. I have desired it too earnestly to neglect seizing the first opportunity after receiving it to write to you.

"It is rare, Monsieur, to find such patriotism as that which is displayed by you. Your anxious labours for the maintenance and advancement of our oppressed Churches are of a sort never to be effaced from our memories. It is unnecessary to reiterate my assurance of the profound respect which I entertain for you personally, or to insist upon the happiness it would afford me to have an opportunity of serving you.

"The attacks which, during the last few years, have been made on us have increased in violence, and the evils inflicted on us have become more intolerable. Besides the grave risks that we have run and still run, we have seen our flocks overwhelmed with fines, exactions and penalties. You must have heard of our misfortunes, and I have no doubt that you, and all compassionate souls who live in happier lands than ours, extend to us their warmest sympathy. Latterly, however, our brethren have not been harassed by legal proceedings or exposed to ill usage. Humanly speaking this immunity is due to the fear felt by the curés of these parts, owing to the action of certain Protestants who (in the month of August last) being driven to desperation, laid violent hands on some of the priests who had been most hostile to us. It is also considered to be partly the result of the influence exercised on the Government by Monsieur the Count De Paulmy, who on his journey through this district was much affected by the way in which we were treated; and, furthermore, this forbearance is probably in a measure owing to a memorial—which has been addressed to the Court by the Protestants, moved thereto by a Catholic nobleman—in which is detailed the various oppressive proceedings to which we have been subjected since the year 1740. As we are assured that this memorial has received the attention it deserves, and that our evil plight has excited compassion, it has occurred to me that you might like to know something of its character and purport. I therefore give you the particulars which I myself furnished respecting my own Church at Ganges. Ganges is a small village of the Cevennes principally inhabited by Protestants, who are devotedly loyal to the throne and remarkable for their industry and thrift. These good qualities, however, do not prevent them from suffering many annoyances, as the following authentic facts sufficiently prove.

"In the year 1746, the Protestants were mulcted in a fine of 2,313 *livres* by the late M. Le Nain, Intendant of Languedoc, on the ground that they had met together for

the worship of God. The money was paid to Sicur Olivier, collector of taxes in Ganges.

"In 1747 they were further fined in the sum of 2,272 *livres* by the same M. Le Nain. This time the amount was collected by Sieur Boudon, receiver of taxes.

"In 1748, Françoise Granger, a Protestant midwife of Ganges, was arrested and kept in prison at Montpellier four years, simply for having followed her calling contrary to the commands of M. Martin, Curé of Ganges, notwithstanding that she had no other way of earning her living.

"In 1751, Jean Rouland, and Pierre Puech were accused of having baptised their children according to the rites of their own communion. The former was condemned to pay 100 *livres* fine and the latter 200, and both were imprisoned at Montpellier, besides being compelled to have their children re-baptised by the Curé of Ganges.

"In 1752 the inhabitants of the same village were made to pay 1500 *livres* at the instance of M. Saint-Priest, Intendant of Languedoc, for having met in an Assembly. Sieur Coularou of Ganges was on this occasion the collector of the impost.

"Besides fines and imprisonments, the Protestants of Ganges have frequently troops quartered upon them, who under pretext of dispersing the assemblies, overrun fields and vineyards, the owners of which do not dare to make remonstrances against these proceedings.

"The Protestants of the town of Ganges, equally with those of the Province of Languedoc, are too firmly convinced of the benevolence of his gracious Majesty to believe that the evils from which they suffer are inflicted by his command. Their misfortunes are solely attributable to the influence of the bishops and curés with the Intendants, who prevail on the latter to tyrannize over the consciences of, and to overwhelm with fines and penalties, those who are obnoxious to the Church. But be the origin of the trouble what it may, it is none the less ruinous to the Huguenots, numbers of whom have been compelled to leave France for neighbouring and

more friendly countries. Those who still remain, and who constitute the majority of the population, trust that his Majesty will ere long make himself acquainted with their miseries, and that he will take steps to ameliorate their sad condition, by placing them beyond the reach of a tyrannical and ambitious clergy who are ever bent upon increasing their sufferings. In the hope of this happy consummation they offer their earnest and fervent prayers on behalf of his Majesty's august person and his whole realm.

"From the particulars I now send, you may judge, Monsieur, of the character of the petitions prepared in the neighbouring towns where the inhabitants endured considerably more annoyance than the people of Ganges, but whatever hopes we may indulge in, as the result of these memorials, we have reason to apprehend fresh onslaughts, as the clergy only wait a favorable opportunity for this purpose.

"We shall be agreeably disappointed to find that our troubles are at an end, or that they are even mitigated in their severity; nevertheless such a happy issue is greatly to be desired, as it is feared that if our brethren are exposed to further troubles they will resort to retaliatory measures, especially against the cruel and bloodthirsty priests who are regarded as the primary cause of their misfortunes. Though it is difficult to restrain those feelings of resentment which find a place in the minds of the greater part of our flock, we do our best to point out to them their duty and enforce patience, even though they are neither permitted to live in peace at home nor to emigrate to lands of liberty abroad.

"As day succeeds day we pine away in our sadness, yet not without alternating hopes and fears. Placed as you are in happier circumstances, may you enjoy that long life and freedom from misfortune so essential to the well-being of our Churches and so much desired for you by your warmest friends.

"If the persecution should become so severe as to compel me to seek an asylum abroad, may I hope for the honor of

your protection? Without, I trust, being deemed presumptuous I may consider myself worthy of it, in virtue of the esteem that I entertain for you and with which I have the honor to remain, Monsieur, very sincerely your humble and obedient servant.

"POMARET, Pastor of the Lower Cevennes."

"My address is, to the care of M. Jonvals, either at his private house, or to the address on the envelope; also to the care of M. Louis Fontanes, citizen of Anduze, in the Cevennes."

The year 1753 was one of blessing to the Protestants, who went about and held assemblies in the Desert without let or hindrance. This was especially the case in Languedoc, where the assemblies were held in the day time. The discipline of the Church was enforced with greater regularity and more strictly so against those apostates who through interested motives or through fear, had renounced the faith and made open profession of Catholicism, and who now returned repentant and ashamed and full of good resolutions for the future. The pastors took fresh courage and occupied themselves in gathering together their dispersed flocks. The following correspondence describes their anxiety and zeal on this score.

Letter from Franc to Benjamin Du Plan (1753).

17th December 1753.

"Monsieur and honored brother in Jesus Christ our Lord,

"Many engagements quickly following one another have hitherto prevented me from replying to the last letter with which you have honored me. I beseech you to rest assured

that this is the sole reason for my long silence. The remarkable tranquillity we have enjoyed during the past year has multiplied our labours without increasing our resources. New converts seeking for instruction, back-sliders desiring to return into the right path and asking for our assistance in their laudable design, the dead in trespasses and sins awakening to the light of life in Jesus Christ our Lord, all demand our unceasing solicitude. To these cares has been superadded the grief of witnessing the defection of my flock and the weight of another charge, part of that formerly belonging to *Sieur Fléchier*, in my immediate neighbourhood, and for whom no substitute could be found. Thus my work, already sufficiently heavy, far from diminishing becomes every day heavier, blessed be God. I nevertheless put aside everything in order that I may gratify my ardent wish to resume our correspondence, for my neglect of which I have a score of times reproached myself.

“ And, first of all, let me hasten to acknowledge your warm expressions of esteem and friendship and to say how deeply sensible I am of your goodness as well as how desirous I am of reciprocating your sentiments. Others may be more worthy of your eulogiums, but none can more value your counsel, or more earnestly desire your good opinion and friendship than myself.

“ But to speak of other things. It seems as if God had ordained that our afflictions should never be stayed. The affair of *M. Coste*, as you are aware, has occasioned us considerable disquiet and has gone far to mar the tranquillity which the forbearance of our enemies had placed within our reach. He was supported by the majority of the faithful as well as by several of our principal men, who refused to lend themselves to any arrangement at all compatible with the honour of the Church or the pastorate, and we had therefore reason to fear another schism. In order to avoid such an eventuality we postponed the assembling of the Synod, but in spite of all our precautions the rupture would have occurred, had not the Almighty afflicted *M. Coste* with a

species of melancholy, owing to which he lost hope, was prevented from discharging the functions of his ministry and failed to receive further countenance from his friends.

"Thus again have our Churches by God's mercy been preserved from impending division, and grievous as are the means by which this blessing has been brought about, yet if we acknowledge in them the workings of Providence we may be enabled to bear the cross with patience and resignation.

"After this occurrence the Synod was immediately convoked for the twenty-seventh of last month, with the view of adopting measures meet for this occasion, and to make such others as the state of the Province rendered necessary. All the pastors, with the exception of M. Coste, took part in the discussions, which were remarkable for their harmony and for the manifestations of mutual confidence and esteem by which they were characterised. Twenty resolutions were passed, several of which related to the ordination to the holy ministry of nine students who had been nominated for examination by five pastors, selected for the purpose. The remainder of the business had regard either to personal matters or to measures which were considered necessary for the future conduct of affairs with greater order and propriety.

"The resolution in the case of M. Coste created the greatest interest and was couched in the following terms: 'That, having taken into consideration the reports circulated respecting Sieur Coste and the sentence pronounced against him by the tribunal of Nismes; having also demanded of the Deputy from Ners why his Church had made no communications on the subject, and the Deputy having explained that this was due to the troubles then prevalent in the country and to the sudden and unexpected arrival of troops—this assembly, while lamenting the misfortunes of the times, urges him to produce the required information with all possible despatch.'

"One word more concerning ourselves. The whole province is over-run with soldiers. We are authoritatively

informed that there are several more squadrons this year than last, but it is less their numbers than the character of their proceedings that causes us so much uneasiness. There is scarcely a village, be it Protestant or Catholic, however poor, insignificant or remote, in which troops are not quartered. Many persons are apprehensive that the object of these measures is the enforcement of Catholic marriage and baptism, and, above all, the removal of pastors in order that the flocks may be the more easily controlled. We continue, however, to receive emphatic assurances to the contrary. God grant that our misgivings may not be realized! But we cannot conceal from ourselves that we have much to fear, especially as at this season of the year it is not possible, as in summer, to sleep out of doors, and because we so often find, according to the proverb, '*l'occasion a fait le larron.*' The priests have won over the officers, and though this has come to pass without any orders from head quarters, it is none the less unfortunate for us. But what can men do against those who are protected of God? In Him we put our trust, we believe that in His infinite compassion He will not suffer our hopes to be disappointed, and that, in sending us trials and troubles, He will give us also strength to bear them, and that by His gracious help we shall come victorious out of the fight which is before us . . .

"FRANC."

*Letter from Paul Rabaut to Benjamin Du Plan
(1753).*

"Monsieur and much honored brother in Jesus Christ,

"I have received with real pleasure and many thanks the letter you have done me the honor to address to me, and I accept heartily your proposal that we should maintain a regular correspondence. I am aware with what deep interest you have followed the sad vicissitudes of our

defenceless Churches, and how you have laboured to strengthen them in the faith. Your disinterested efforts have not been resultless and I feel sure that you have experienced a lively satisfaction in knowing how effectually you have contributed to rekindle that lamp that had begun to burn with so feeble light, yet which we trust will now become a radiant flame, illuminating not alone those who are of the household but those even who have the misfortune to be aliens. May our united efforts be crowned with the fullest success, and to this end, Monsieur and honored brother, let us strenuously labour, remembering that 'in due season we shall reap if we faint not.'

"It appears, Monsieur, from the contents of your letter that you have been informed that I have been studying the Prophets of the old Testament. This study has afforded me great pleasure and I have derived from it both encouragement and consolation. I know well enough that it is no easy matter to understand the figurative language so frequently made use of by the Prophets, especially if we are not familiar with their style; but when we have overcome this difficulty and have given due attention to the explanations they themselves afford of their symbols and metaphors, the shadows partially vanish and light appears. Theologians have too much neglected this study, the great utility of which could be easily demonstrated if it was our object to do so. They have spiritualized beyond measure those promises that undoubtedly refer to temporal matters, a mistake which constitutes one of the obstacles to the conversion of the Jews; what more forcible instance can be adduced than the explanation commonly given of the prediction in the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah concerning the new heavens and the new earth? It is sufficient to read the passage to discover that it refers neither to the Jews after their return from captivity, nor to the victorious Christians of to-day, for neither the one nor the other have ever enjoyed that perfect peace which the Lord there promises to His people. On the other hand it cannot be said

to refer to the bliss of heaven, because it is expressly stated that the promised rejoicing shall take place upon the earth indeed it can scarcely be elsewhere than on the earth that houses are to be built and children begotten, etc. But if we apply the prophecy to the Millennium, when the Messiah shall descend and commence His reign upon the earth, when the Ancient of Days shall bestow upon Him dominion and honour and power, so that all people, nations and languages shall serve Him, this magnificent promise is altogether on a different basis, and without doing it any violence the whole context explains itself. For confirmation of these views, read Micah Ch. IV, v. 1-4; Isaiah Ch. II, v. 2-4; Ch. XXXII, v. 1 and 17; Ch. LIV, v. 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 14; Ch. LX, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 15, 21, 22; Ch. LXII, especially verses 8 and 9; Ch. LXVI, v. 12; Jeremiah, Ch. III, v. 17.

"In accordance with the glorious promises of God I trust He will in the end have compassion on His Church and make it renowned throughout the earth. Although I may scarcely venture to specify the time of its deliverance, yet if the saying be true, as I presume it is, that the captivity of the Jews in Babylon is a type of our own, the end of our troubles cannot be far off, seeing that we are now in the sixty-eighth year. Be that as it may, the Lord in His anger does not forget to be merciful or to grant us from time to time some respite from our sufferings.

"For several months past we have enjoyed a great calm throughout the province of Languedoc. We are baptising and marrying without the slightest interference, and our assemblies, which are very numerous, are not molested. The one over which I preside is held about half a league from the town, and on Sunday last, a fast day, I had, without any exaggeration, at least ten thousand auditors, all of them inhabitants of Nismes. About the commencement of the month of December last the Protestants of Gardonnenque were accused of coming together under arms, but this charge was proved to be a vile and baseless calumny and therefore, thank God, it has produced no evil consequences. Not-

withstanding the persistent cruelty and evil insinuations of the clergy, the Government, as we are credibly informed, appears to be favorably disposed towards us ; yet there are many of our brethren and sisters still suffering either in the prisons or on the galleys. May it please God soon to break their chains and set them at liberty, and while awaiting this issue, may He support them by the power of His Holy Spirit !

“ You will very much oblige me, Monsieur and honored brother, if you will furnish me with your views respecting the doctrines of the Moravians. I have held conversations with some members of this society, besides having read several of their books, and the result is to convince me that their teachings are both good and bad. I entirely agree with them in thinking that Christ crucified ought to be the common theme of our speech, discourses and meditations, inasmuch as this blessed sacrifice is the basis of our salvation, the foundation of our hope, and the source of our consolation ; but to preach Christ and Him crucified is not alone to show forth His death, but to proclaim the truths of the Gospel and the obligations of morality. I read in the New Testament that Jesus Christ and His apostles laid great stress on the vices we should shun and the virtues we should practise. I also meet with numerous precepts and examples which unmistakably prove that, as a rule, our prayers ought to be addressed to God through the intercession of Jesus Christ. Our brethren, however, follow a totally different course, they almost always address their petitions to the Son and rarely to the Father, though it is to be feared that by ignoring the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, we may peradventure lose sight of the teachings of the Gospel, which are my only rule and compass, to guide me on my way and give me hope of an answer when my petitions are offered to the Father through the Son.

“ I take the liberty, Monsieur, of referring you to the enclosed. After having read it and well considered the

subject to which it relates, please supply the address, seal up the letter and forward it to its destination. If, at the same time, you can add anything to further the object in view you will be doing a good work. I hear that the elder Roquet used to live in the district of Petersfields; I have no doubt you can easily discover in what University the son pursues his studies. Please offer my humble salutations to Messieurs Viala, Dunière and Cler. I trust you will excuse all mistakes in my letter, as I have been compelled to write it in great haste. I have communicated your message to Monsieur Redonnel; he is well and is at present at Montpellier. I have the honor to remain, Monsieur and much honored brother, your very humble and obedient servant

“PAUL RABAUT.”

9th of March, 1753.

Unfortunately the respite from persecution was of short duration. The Duke De Richelieu had ordered the persecution to cease, less from any idea of toleration than from inability to carry it out effectually, and now that his forces were augmented he proceeded to the best of his ability to carry out the behests of the bishops, and in particular of the Bishop of Alais. Before returning to Paris he issued his commands to the Protestants, for which purpose he visited Nismes, Alais, and Uzès, where, having summoned before him the leaders of the Huguenots, he forbade their assemblies in the Desert under pain of the expulsion of the pastors. So soon as he left the Province, he ordered thirty battalions to occupy the towns and villages, and detachments of them to patrol the country night and day; in order

that all attempts to hold meetings might be rendered impossible.

"It is first of all necessary to drive away the preachers," said the Abbot De Caveirac, "for it is they who encourage our fellow citizens to disobey the laws, by inviting them to attend the assemblies, by solemnizing baptisms and marriages in the Desert and by the doctrines which they teach. So long as they remain in France all our efforts are useless." A thousand crowns reward was offered for the capture of any one of them, and although the promised remuneration naturally called into existence a host of spies and traitors, the preachers with only one exception succeeded in evading their wiles as well as escaping the pursuit of the soldiers. The younger Tessier, known as Lafage, was surprised in the dead of night in the *Mas de Novis* situated in the diocese of Alais. On attempting to escape by the roof, his arm was broken by a bullet from the gun of a soldier and, a few days afterwards, he was captured. He died with great heroism on the gibbet at Montpellier.

At length it was discovered that the surest and most expeditious way of getting rid of these "public pests" was that so successfully adopted in the case of Antoine Court, and again suggested by some miscreant in a memoir submitted to the Government in 1750. The plan proposed was to imprison the wives and children of the preachers and to permit their liberation only when the preachers themselves should have quitted the country. Upon its being

put into execution, the wife of Rabaut, who expected to become an early victim, left her home and wandered into the Desert, whilst others, less fortunate, were summarily arrested.

Amongst Du Plan's correspondence we find several letters from his preacher-friends descriptive of the condition of Protestantism in 1754. These we proceed to quote.

Letter from Franc to Benjamin Du Plan.

"Lower Languedoc, the 26th of July, 1754.

"Our affairs remain much in the same state as in February last, when M. le Maréchal issued his ban against us. Although the troops are ordered out less frequently on week days, there is no relaxation in this respect on Sundays and fête days. On the slightest provocation, a detachment of three hundred infantry and a troop of cavalry are quickly on foot, while at other times smaller bodies are stationed in ambush along the roads where we are expected to pass. So great vigilance, however, has only been displayed in the four episcopal seats of Alais, Uzès, Nismes and Montpellier. In the villages and country districts—except in places where the commandant is inclined for persecution—a less strenuous vigilance is observed.

"Of this circumstance advantage is from time to time taken to hold assemblies. One was summoned to meet on the fifth of this month about a league and a half from the town, on the occasion of the mustering in the town, of the garrisons of several neighbouring villages. We availed ourselves of what we rightly conceived to be this favorable opportunity to celebrate the Lord's supper and were not molested, although the purpose for which we were meeting was well known.

"The brethren in the neighbourhood of Saint-Hippolyte-de-Caton who held a meeting last Whitsuntide were not so fortunate. At the very moment they were dispersing, the garrison of Saint-Jean-de-Ceyrargues sallied forth, pursued and put them to flight, capturing three men and five women with three infants who had been brought to be baptised. The five women were reconducted by the soldiers to the town of Saint-Maurice to which they belonged and taken to the Church where the prior forthwith baptised the three infants. The women were then permitted to go to their own houses, on a written statement from the prior to the sergeant that they had only been visiting their relations and not attending the assembly.

"However, two days afterwards Sieur Chambon, sub-delegate of the Intendant of Uzès, on visiting the town with a troop of horse soldiers, had them arrested, put two of them into prison at Uzès and allowed the other three to stay in their houses on condition that their husbands should be produced whenever they were required. The three men, of whom two belonged to Saint-Césaire and the other to Ners, were imprisoned at Saint-Jean but were removed to the Fort of Alais on the following day. Two were liberated some days ago but the third still remains in confinement.

"A letter received from M. Gibert, a Pastor in the Lower Périgord, apprises me that on the night of the 18th and 19th of last month, just as he had dismissed an assembly held in the neighbourhood of Sainte-Foy, sixty dragoons suddenly appeared and fired thirty musket shots at the worshippers, wounded one man with the bayonet and took forty-four prisoners. A relative of the Pastor, an aspirant to the holy ministry, who happened to be present and who was captured and cast into prison, fortunately made his escape or he would have fallen a victim to the Jesuits. M. Gibert also informs me that thirty troopers have been ravaging the Churches of the Saintonge, compelling by threats the baptism of children who had already been baptised by our ministers and making prisoners of men who had not alone

never attended the assemblies but who had never even countenanced them. A friend living in the same neighbourhood states that four of his kinsfolk having been exiled one of them tried to prevail on the judges to reconsider the sentence, but in vain. These proscriptions are supposed to be the result of some other raid, as in Saintonge there were only three captures effected—if we except the faint-hearted who surrendered at discretion—whilst the prisoners taken at Saint-Foy could not have been so soon brought to judgment. In fact, it is said, that shortly before the meeting of the assembly that terminated so disastrously, there had been several well-known persons arrested in this locality. The same friend, in confirming the account of the attack of the dragoons, tells me that there were five or six killed, fourteen or fifteen wounded, and forty-five prisoners taken. I hardly know whether I ought to consider him better informed than the pastor as to the number of killed and wounded, but as touching the prisoners there is virtually no difference in the two statements, it being evident that the pastor at the time he wrote no longer took any account of the kinsman who had made his escape.

“Towards the end of the same month a small assembly convoked at Saint-Ambroix in the Cevennes, to take part in a baptismal service, was dispersed by the soldiers, and two of the worshippers—according to some statements three—were captured, as well as one of the infant candidates for baptism. They are still in prison.

“A correspondent at Montpellier tells me that on the 17th inst. an officer was arrested near Castres in Albigeois and that five other persons from the same locality were seized and searched. It is not known for what reason; some say for having summoned an assembly, others, that they had taken part in a wedding ceremony in the Desert. The officer had gone to Montpellier to speak to the Intendant, but the latter refusing to listen to him, ordered him at once to quit the building, if he did not wish to be arrested. After he had left, the Intendant ordered his yeomanry guard

to follow him and seize him, and conduct him to the citadel, where he still remains. I hear that some of the inhabitants of Cournonsec, near Montpellier, for refusing to decorate the fronts of their houses in honor of the holy day styled Fête-Dieu, have been mulcted in heavy fines, and that the Intendant has ordered them to be confined in the dungeons of the palace of M. André, until the money is forthcoming which condition is not yet complied with.

"These facts, Monsieur and honored brother, are eloquent as to the external condition of our Churches both in this and neighbouring provinces, but, so far from being made better by these chastenings, it would appear that iniquity and unbelief the more abound, a misfortune that gives me greater sorrow than all our other troubles and makes me apprehensive of severe visitations of Providence. Oh, that our Churches, strong in a living faith and filled with the Holy Spirit, could look forward with patience to the advent of their celestial spouse! I should then hope for a happier future; otherwise my anticipations are of the gloomiest. . . .

"FRANC."

Letter from Pomaret to Benjamin Du Plan (1754).

"I fully appreciate the earnestness of your exhortations and shall not fail to apply them personally. Although I am aware of the importance of remaining with our flocks and doing our best to protect them from the attacks of the cruel vultures who seek to devour them, yet circumstances have suddenly assumed so alarming a form that we can scarcely avoid retreating until the excitement shall have abated. I am thoroughly acquainted with the past history of our Churches, and the various expedients that have been devised for their extinction, yet never have I seen them more adroitly attacked than at this present time. They are molested on all sides, and unless providentially sustained they will

have much to do to withstand the storm. Possibly God may come to their assistance sooner than we anticipate, at all events let us hope and pray without ceasing that it may be so.

"Every province of the Kingdom in which the Protestants have sought to conceal their principles has been occupied by troops; and as barracks are being built in the most refractory villages and great expenses are being incurred for furnishing the garrisons with beds, etc.—which would not be done if it were intended to make but a temporary stay—we have reason to fear that it is in contemplation to attempt the utter extinction of our belief. A night sortie took place on the fourth inst. when a great many houses both in town and country were ransacked by the soldiers. One of my comrades, known by the name of Lafage, who has been connected with the holy ministry for two years, and who was surprised in his house and had the bad luck to be hit by a musket ball in the arm, was afterwards made prisoner, together with all his family. He was taken to Montpellier where he will have to submit to the fate of his predecessors in his sad but glorious calling. May God strengthen him to endure the trial!

"Had it not been for a Catholic friend I should also have been captured, for I had scarcely quitted my hiding place when it was surrounded by a numerous detachment and preparations were made for a thorough search. Since that disastrous time, I have adopted the expedient of turning night into day, and my people, seeing to what danger I am exposed through the fury of our enemies who are constantly on the look-out for me, have earnestly besought me to yield to circumstances and retire into Switzerland for a few months, as the consternation is so widespread that they can no longer offer me an asylum. I shall therefore be under the necessity of going away until the return of happier days; but as our flocks are paralyzed with the heavy imposts and the annoyances to which they are subjected, and as it is impossible for me unassisted to maintain myself in my place of refuge,

I shall be particularly obliged if you will interest yourself on my behalf, especially as I know that any pains you may take to procure me assistance will certainly be successful.

"Should I be forced to go away I need hardly describe to you the sorrow I shall experience; my flock, however, will only become still more dear to me, and I shall leave with the firm resolution to rejoin them so soon as circumstances will permit. I consider that the interests of his flock should be the object most dear to the heart of every true pastor; and for this we have the example of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Primitive Church. One thing I especially ask of God is that Desert baptisms and marriages shall not be interfered with, for I fear that if the hands of our cruel enemies are not arrested, this is a calamity to which we shall ere long be exposed. We have good reason to apprehend danger as you will perceive from the letter written by the Bishop of Alais to the curés of his diocese, and my rejoinder thereto, which I will enclose if it does not make my packet too heavy. If our illustrious friends of your city, whom I take the liberty respectfully to salute, could in any manner help to ameliorate the sad condition of our faithful, what a work of charity would it be! I wish you all prosperity and beseech you to believe me with the sincerest respect,

"POMARET."

In 1755 the Duke De Richelieu surrendered the office of governor of the Province of Languedoc to the Duke De Mirepoix, who at first continued to carry out the policy of his predecessor; but on becoming better acquainted with the Protestants he gradually relaxed the severity of his measures, and at length entered into personal relations with the preachers themselves. The dragonnades were discontinued, the assemblies were no longer molested,

and the conferences were permitted to meet and deliberate. In certain towns, for instance Saint-Geniès, Sommières, Vauvert, Montaren, and Saint-Ambroix, the Churches were so emboldened as to contemplate the rebuilding of their demolished temples. This, however, was more than Mirepoix would suffer, and he ordered the soldiers to destroy the already partially constructed walls. None the less did this so wide-spread toleration excite the anger of the clergy, and at an extraordinary general assembly which met in Paris in 1758 they manifested great indignation. Monsieur the Count De Saint-Florentin, to whom their remonstrances were addressed, assured them, in the name of the King, of his firm resolve to enforce compliance with the edicts. But the Government was embarrassed; all its forces were engaged in the war, and it feared that a continuance of persecution might only create fresh internal danger by inciting the Protestants to rebellion.

The death of Mirepoix, which occurred towards the end of 1757, simplified the situation. With a view to appease the clergy the Marshal De Thomond, who had distinguished himself by his ardent opposition to the Huguenots in Guienne, was appointed to succeed Mirepoix. As a counterpoise, and to propitiate the Protestants, the King desired the Marshal to display consideration and tact in his dealings with them. "You must," said his Majesty, "hold them in check rather than provoke them to rebellion, affect some degree of ignorance, use,

320 *Marshall De Thomond succeeds Mirepoix in 1757.*

without compromising your authority, threaten rather than punish, and in a word recur to the measures adopted during the late war, and the wisdom of which was fully confirmed by the event." By this astute policy the Court hoped to maintain friendly terms as well with the Protestants as the clergy.

Marshal De Thomond complied with these instructions, and Languedoc enjoyed, until 1760, an unwonted tranquillity.

There were of course some isolated cases of fine and imprisonment, but the object of these proceedings was rather to check the over zealous, and make a show of enforcing the law, than to rekindle persecution. This policy had further the effect of satisfying the clergy without embarrassing the Government.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1751—1763.

The long and troublesome litigation forced upon Du Plan by the Committee at Geneva darkened the latter years of his life. He remembered now, though too late, the warning and advice given to him by his true friends, M. Turretin and M. Vial de Beaumont.¹ His services on behalf of the Churches in travelling and in various other ways had entailed the sacrifice

1. See page 230.

of his entire fortune which consisted of the residue of his paternal inheritance, and the legacies left to him by his aunt, his sister and his foster-mother.¹ At the end of his long career, and after all the sacrifices he had made, which, however, were as nothing compared with the time and the labour he had lavished on the cause, he found himself under the painful necessity of attempting to force from those whom his exertions had enriched the means of making his declining years comfortable. The provision which he claimed had to be torn piece-meal from the hands of men who showed greater anxiety to preserve the Churches' pence than to recompense the services of her devoted ministers. His modest request was stigmatized as unjust, exaggerated and exorbitant, and the aged Deputy was forced to the humiliation of calling in experts and arbitrators to weigh and value and estimate and cheapen his toil, his zeal and his sacrifices. In this ignoble struggle one of his opponents, moved by jealousy and spite, dared even to cast doubts on the purity of Du Plan's motives and question the integrity of his character, while the accuser himself, a spendthrift and a prodigal, was living at the expense of his neighbours and throwing away in lavish profusion the Churches' funds. The French noble was deeply indignant at these imputations on his good faith, while the Christian—the story of whose life

1. The foster-mother of Du Plan was Jeanne Dumas; she died at Geneva in 1740 and bequeathed to him her little property.

alone ought to have been a sufficient safeguard against the shafts of calumny—was compelled to defend himself, to produce his accounts, to justify his pretensions, and, for the first time in his life, to tell his left hand that which had been done by his right. For a moment even he believed himself abandoned and betrayed by his most faithful friend, and sacrificed by those who for thirty years he had unstintingly served. It is not to be wondered at that, under these circumstances, his letters should show considerable warmth and that, alike in attack and defence, he was occasionally led to use expressions somewhat too passionate. Yet, though for these indiscretions he could plead many excuses and almost unendurable provocations, he was the first to acknowledge and deplore the intemperate expressions in which his lacerated feelings and momentary anger had caused him to indulge.

The trouble, annoyance and weariness he underwent in the defence of his honor and his rights (it is from himself that we learn these details) so affected his sight that he nearly lost the use of his right eye, besides almost consummating the ruin of his already too delicate health. It was at this time of bitter trial and while afflicted with a dangerous illness, that Providence took pity on him and sent to his relief a guardian angel—a widow, Madame Denman¹—who solaced his broken spirit and reconciled him to life; and who, touched with compassion at his sad

1. She was the daughter of Monsieur Du Passage De Voutron, a French Refugee noble, of La Rochelle.

and lonely condition, offered him a refuge in her own house in the neighbourhood of London. The careful nursing of this kind-hearted and devoted woman, under the blessing of God, preserved his life and restored him to health. Du Plan, as a proof of his attachment, and moved with gratitude, offered her his hand, which she accepted, and they were married on the fourth of November, 1751, by the Rev. J. J. Majendie in the French Church, Spring Gardens, London.¹ Du Plan's witnesses on the occasion were his old and faithful friends Pierre Gaussen, De Polier, De Bottens and André Bousquet.

Two children, a daughter and a son, soon appeared on the scene to brighten the home of this faithful servant of the Church and to efface from his memory the ingratitude and depravity from which he had so cruelly suffered. In this happy home, sanctified by the love of a pious wife and gladdened by the presence of his little ones, his heart expanded with happiness and his life was sufficiently prolonged to see the children of his old age grow up and develop under his paternal care.

It was from this blessed haven of rest, reserved for him by Providence, that Du Plan watched the progress of the storm which still raged in his fatherland. From time to time some of his fellow countrymen—saved from the wreck, but destitute of all—arrived in London. They never failed to find their way to his house, for was he not

1. Du Plan was aged 63 years, Madame Denman about 40 years.

the Churches' Deputy and the faithful friend of unhappy refugees? His home, which was open to all, soon become a centre for information and a place of call, for even when sick and infirm he helped, in one way or another, everyone who appealed to him, and never hesitated to use his influence with his many friends on behalf of all who solicited his services.

Among the first to receive tokens of his sympathy and protection were his former companions in the service of the Churches, those who with him had grasped the helm during the storm, and like shipwrecked waifs past work, were now cast helpless on a foreign strand—Cortiez, Chapel, Roux—though all, whether pastors, laymen or widows of the confessors, were alike welcomed.

The following is a note found amongst the papers of the aged Deputy. It is in the form of a minute and was no doubt addressed to some eminent personage. The document bears date, November, 1756.

"Amongst the persons who call forth our esteem and admiration, and demand our aid, it appears to me that we should place first those who are actually suffering on the galleys for the sake of the Gospel.

"In the second rank should be placed those who have endured hardship for the truth, but who at present enjoy liberty of conscience, partially deprived though they may be of the means of subsistence.

"While, lastly, should come they who have abandoned both possessions and country in order that they may enjoy liberty of conscience, who are poor or whom age and infirmity have rendered incapable of earning their living.

"The Apostle Paul exhorts us to do good unto all men,

especially unto them who are of the household of faith, and in obedience to this exhortation it is our duty to weigh the claims of every one and the special circumstances in which each is placed.

"I would range in three classes those who are at present free to exercise liberty of conscience, naming amongst the first Monsieur Pierre Cortiez, Minister of the Gospel, a refugee at Zurich, and Monsieur Jean Chapel, a refugee at the Hague. The former has served the Churches of France during a period of thirty years and has been largely instrumental in their re-establishment, though he has endured much tribulation. It is true that he is now the recipient of an annuity from their Excellencies the Magistrates of Zurich, but besides being old and infirm he has dependent upon him the little children of a daughter who has recently died, besides two invalid sisters-in-law, sufferers for religion, one of whom is a recent refugee. Monsieur Chapel for twenty years has faithfully ministered to the Churches and, by his earnest exhortations, has materially contributed to their prosperity. For seven years he was a prisoner on the galleys. Although receiving a pension of two hundred and fifty florins from Holland, he is in debt through expenses incurred in the maintenance of an extensive correspondence with his brethren in France and through having been frequently deceived by men on whose behalf he had solicited charity.

"In the second class I instance Monsieur Roux, a refugee at Lausanne, and a servant of the Churches under the Cross for twenty-five years. The small pension he receives is far from sufficient, as he has to share it with a sister who attends upon him and they both, owing to their age and infirmity, require additional comforts.

"I put in the third class Monsieur Bel and Sieur Beaumes,¹ former prisoners on the galleys for the faith; Sieur David David, now an invalid and in declining years,

1. Sieur Beaumes was a native of Alais; Du Plan prior to his marriage had lodged at the house of his fellow citizen.

but in his younger days a prisoner for the cause or Protestantism; Madame Viala, the widow of a Minister who did much to strengthen the Reformed Churches of France in the faith, and Madame Serre, the aged widow of a Confessor, deserving much compassionate sympathy. The same ought also to be extended to Monsieur De Faure, who abandoned a good position for righteousness' sake and who is now without property, pension or employment. I could name many other similar cases, but God will provide for them in His own good time."

The most striking circumstance disclosed in the foregoing recital is the generosity of the Deputy towards Cortiez. The difficulties and annoyances which the latter had occasioned him are well known, but Du Plan had long since forgiven and forgotten all. He treated his implacable adversary, Serces, with equal magnanimity, was the first to make advances to him and to propose reconciliation and a resumption of friendly relations.

Those who were still fighting the good fight in France had the warmest sympathy of the aged Deputy. The young recruits in the cause showed themselves worthy of their veteran predecessors, and though few of the pastors of this time were acquainted personally with Du Plan, yet they all admired his character and submitted to his influence. Of this, the correspondence we have already cited affords convincing proof. When he heard of the recommencement of that severe persecution which lasted from 1744 to 1752 and which we have been recounting, he took up his pen and from his land of exile addressed the following eloquent petition to Louis XV.

" Sire,

" The King of Kings allows the weak and unhappy to confide in Him their griefs, and promises to soothe their sorrows and lighten their burdens. May we not then hope that your Majesty, who is the earthly type of the Lord of the Universe, will deign to lend an attentive ear to the voice of our supplications ?

" We, Sire, who throw ourselves at your Majesty's feet, with reverence and deep humility, beseeching your Majesty to look with compassion on our deplorable state, are your Majesty's Protestant subjects of Lower Languedoc, who are emboldened to think that we shall receive that consideration which is due to our earnest determination to uphold the throne of your Majesty at the sacrifice of everything we hold most precious in this world.

" Our adversaries, Sire, spare no pains to disparage us in the estimation of your Majesty, under pretext that it is out of perverse opposition to your Majesty's interests we assemble ourselves together for the worship of God, and for the celebration by our pastors of the ordinances of marriage and baptism ; and this object is the more easily gained, inasmuch as it is forbidden to us to defend ourselves, although we trust that in approaching the throne as we now do to make known our grievances, we shall receive a hearing from your Majesty and shall be justly and generously dealt with,

" In the first place, Sire, we protest before God, who knows the hearts of all men, that it is in no spirit of revolt or independence that we hold our religious assemblies, but simply because we consider it to be absolutely essential to render public worship to that Supreme Being who has it in His power to confer upon His creatures eternal happiness or everlasting misery. We do not consider it necessary to set forth the reasons which prove the necessity of this worship, because it is evident that not only are all Christian communities—whatever be their differences in creed—at one

on this point, but that the early Christians chose rather to submit to all kinds of suffering than to neglect so important a duty.

"Furthermore, Sire, we take the liberty of asserting that it is to the direct advantage of your Majesty and of the State that Protestants should enjoy the free exercise of their religion, for it is by the teaching of their ministers that they learn their duty to God, to your Majesty, and to their country; by this means, too, ignorance is conquered, infidelity opposed, and superstition and fanaticism—the primary causes of all the most serious disturbances—rooted out. With regard to our marriages, what, we ask, would your Majesty think of us if we were capable of solemnizing them according to the requirements of the priests? Can we hypocritically renounce a religion that we believe to be true without proving ourselves to be dishonest, profane, and devoid of conscience? Who knows how much the solid foundations of your Majesty's throne are dependent on truth and honesty, for if a man believe not in God can he be loyal to his King?

"And lastly, Sire, we cannot conscientiously allow our children to be baptised by the priests, inasmuch as baptism implies an acceptance of the communion into which the children are received, apart from the engagements made by their father and sponsors to bring them up in the Roman Catholic faith, and this is an abjuration of our own religion.

"This, in a few words, Sire, is our case. Were we less scrupulous, were we resolved to disregard the voice of conscience, were we without religion, and had we not the fear of God before our eyes, we should be under the protection of the law; but because we honor our Creator and fear to offend Him, we are treated as if we were enemies of the State, we are hunted down in the Desert like wild beasts, our goods are seized, our children are taken from us, we are shut up in prisons, we are sent to the galleys; and, though our ministers daily exhort us to fulfil our duties as good citizens and faithful subjects, a price is put upon their

heads, and when they are captured it is only that they may suffer execution.

"Great King, whose predominant characteristic is that of beneficence, shall we alone be deprived of your clemency? Father of your other subjects will you not extend your solitude also to us? Will you, Sire, suffer to be thus maltreated a community who are devotedly loyal to the Throne, and whose only reproach is that they are too firmly attached to their religion? Oh, Sire, let those who take pleasure in calumniating, say what they may, be assured that you have no truer or more obedient subjects than the Protestants. Is it a question of paying the poll tax or other dues required by the State—who more ready than we to meet the demand? If exorbitant and ruinous fines are imposed upon us are they not promptly met? And when your Majesty found it necessary to establish the *vingtième*¹ did not the Protestants at once assent to it, though they clearly perceived that the clergy would view the act with displeasure and spare no pains to consummate the ruin of the Protestants. Had the suppliants of your Majesty been animated by that rebellious spirit which has been falsely imputed to them by their enemies, they would not have acted as they did when the Province was invaded by the Austrians, for neither the approach of the army, through whose intervention the Huguenots might have obtained relief from their sufferings, nor the flattering hope of being able to serve God freely, was able to shake their loyalty. As to the latter point, our ministers did themselves the honor of writing to Monsieur the Intendant, who testified his satisfaction with the sentiments and conduct of the flocks.

"Imagine, Sire, our grief when we learned that your Majesty was ill at Metz. How fervent were our prayers for your Majesty's recovery, and on the happy restoration to health how great was our joy! Nothing can exceed our devoted affection for your Majesty's person, or our grief at

1. See page 281.

being denied all opportunity for the manifestation of our loyalty to the throne!

"Deign then, Sire, to have pity on a people who have been so severely tried and whose highest happiness it would be to convince your Majesty of their obedience and fidelity. Do not compel us to exhibit our mistortunes and misery in foreign countries, where their disclosure could only tend to the discredit of your Majesty's realm. We throw ourselves, illustrious Prince, on your clemency, and we venture to hope that the punishment of death will no longer be inflicted on our pastors, that the bonds which bind our brethren may be loosened and their prison doors unbarred, that our children may no more be torn from our arms, that the necessity of acting contrary to our convictions may cease to be imposed on us, and that we be not for the future forbidden the public profession of that religion in the absence of which life itself were but a prolonged death.

"It is because, Sire, we are so firmly convinced of your Majesty's goodness, as well as desire to ameliorate our hard lot, that we make bold to lay before your Majesty this humble petition, in the full confidence that we shall receive a favorable hearing; at the same time we will address to the King of Kings the most earnest prayers for the preservation of your Majesty's sacred person, the prosperity of your Majesty's reign and the happiness of your Majesty's subjects.

While awaiting the blessing of Providence on the measures taken in the hope of turning away the wrath of the persecutors, Du Plan continued his efforts on behalf of their victims. His thoughts were constantly directed to the noble confessors, chained with criminals on the King's galleys, and to the women immured as in a living tomb in the Tower of Constance. Rendered incapable by his infirmities of pleading in person, as he had been wont to do,

with the great and powerful, the cause of those so dear to his heart, he sought to reconstitute a society he had founded in London for the purpose of procuring them succour, and with this view he published amongst the French refugees and his co-religionists in England the following touching appeal:—

“Twenty-five years since a few pious persons, most of whom had come out of great tribulation and who were consequently deeply concerned in the *froissure de Joseph*,¹ constituted themselves into a Society with the object of relieving those who, in prisons and on the galleys, were suffering in the cause of religion. This society was supported for several years by the voluntary efforts of several pastors and elders, who, not confining their good deeds to their own flocks, helped generously and frequently other members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ who were suffering in places where persecution prevailed.

“But beside the fact that, with the lapse of time, death has removed the greater number of the members of this benevolent society, a variety of circumstances has for several years hindered the gathering of contributions for the illustrious unfortunates, whose numbers renewed persecutions have so greatly increased. Sensible as we ought to be of the evils with which our brethren are afflicted, and of the obligation laid upon us to plead for them with those of other lands upon whom God has bestowed the priceless blessing of liberty of conscience, we address ourselves with confidence to all that do not regard the noble name of Christian as a meaningless title, and to all that are animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ our merciful Saviour, who voluntarily left the glory of His Father's throne, took upon Himself our nature with all its infirmities, and suffered and died for our salvation. It is to earnest and faithful Christians

1. See page 235.

who like their Master suffer in sympathy with their brethren, who languish with them in prison, and labour with them on the galleys, that we confidently appeal for that assistance they will regard it as a privilege to afford as the Lord has blessed them.

"Useless were it to appeal to men of the world and members of the Church, whose charity is less than the charity of the Samaritan of the Gospel or of heathens who have not renounced their humanity.

"Neither do we expect sympathy or help from those whose only solicitude is for themselves, or at the most for those of their own circle, from whom they hope to receive similar if not largely augmented services in return.

"That, however, which gives us the greatest concern is to hear the grave and authoritative condemnation passed by misinformed persons, whom we nevertheless esteem, not alone on the Protestant Churches of France, on the assemblies which meet for public worship in the country where persecution is rife, and on the faithful who are suffering on galleys and in prisons for having served God according to the promptings of their consciences, but also on those heroic pastors, who after the example of Jesus Christ, the apostles, the prophets and many of our reformers, have nobly sealed with their blood the truths proclaimed by them, amid dangers the most formidable and fatigues the most severe.

"The passage from the Bible which is quoted as an authority for the disparagement of the confessors and martyrs of our day, is this, 'When they persecute you in this city flee ye into another,' and it is asserted that this injunction is sufficient authority to justify the faithful in running from their country to avoid persecution. But are we warranted in making so sweeping an induction? Would not desertion from the standard of the faith by the early Christians—so renowned and so worthy of all praise for their piety and zeal—have been considered base and cowardly? Do we not read that the Apostles returned into countries where they had been ill-treated, and are

we not aware that in so doing they only followed the example of their Master, who though He sometimes passed through the midst of the people unobserved and at other times hid Himself, yet never abandoned the battle-field until by His sufferings and death he had fulfilled His ministry and consummated our salvation?

"Furthermore, it is satisfactory to know that God, though permitting certain kingdoms of the world to remain in the darkness of ignorance, superstition and idolatry, yet wills that, in spite of its enemies, the Light of the Gospel shall shine out in greater splendour, until, according to the predictions both of the Old Testament and the New, it shall convert all nations to a knowledge of Himself.

"Never was the Church more pure than during the first three centuries of the Christian era, a time when believers were exposed to constant persecution. Never were Protestants more steadfast than in the early days of the Reformation, when scaffolds were erected and fires kindled for those who made a profession of the true Gospel. Why then denounce the Protestant Churches of to-day, which have come into existence through a furnace of tribulation and which the Almighty in His mercy, by a miracle, has caused to flourish in the midst of their enemies?

"Can we withhold our respect from those who have abandoned property and country for the free worship of God in foreign lands? And are they in any whit behind those who, following the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles and martyrs whose memory we revere, have sacrificed not alone goods, but liberty, yea even life itself, for the glory of God and the edification of the Church?

"We ask of the children of God who are blessed with liberty of conscience and worldly prosperity, neither the sacrifice of their lives, their liberty, nor even of the whole of their property for the deliverance or relief of their suffering brethren who are in captivity; we only ask of their charity so much of their substance as their circumstances will afford, though we do expect that whatsoever they give, it shall be

given willingly, for charity ought to be free and to come unconstrained from the heart. That which is bestowed reluctantly or from motives of vanity or self-interest can never be acceptable in God's sight.

"But how ungrudgingly soever charity may be dispensed, it by no means follows that a Christian ought to regard himself as the absolute owner of his worldly possessions; he is simply a steward, he is not, it is true, obliged to give an account of his stewardship to his fellow men, but to God he must account, for to Him we all belong more completely than the slave belongs to the master who has purchased him and who keeps him; it is God who has created us, and redeemed us through the precious blood of His dear Son, and without the protection of Providence we could not exist for a single moment.

"A Christian who does not look upon himself as proprietor, but only as trustee of the goods that he enjoys, studies how to please by his able management the master who has confided them to his care, in order that he may render himself worthy of an eternal inheritance.

"God, who has bestowed upon all men for their own salvation and for the good of their neighbours different degrees of talent, has not told them when he will call upon them to give an account of their stewardship. They are but depositaries of the talents, the property, and even the life that God has entrusted to them, and of which it may please Him at any moment to deprive them.

"Although these truths meet with general acceptance, and our daily experience brings them forcibly before us, they have far too little influence over our conduct. The majority of men, instead of preparing themselves to meet their God to render to Him with confidence an account of their deeds done in the flesh, are given over to the cares and pleasures of this life or to worldly occupations by which their thoughts are exclusively engrossed.

"It were useless for us (unless a miracle of Providence should be performed in our favour) to appeal to persons of

this sort on behalf of our brethren who, for having served God according to their consciences, are supporting a miserable existence in prisons or under bonds on the galleys. But we address ourselves with confidence to those who know and truly love the Lord, who are conscious of the evils to which the Church is exposed, who suffer with the mystical body of Christ's Church, and who love their neighbour as themselves. We appeal to them with confidence, for we feel persuaded that they only need to be informed that certain respectable and trustworthy persons have undertaken to collect money for the relief of the persecuted and to apply it faithfully according to the wishes of the donors; we are, I say, persuaded that our brethren will gladly contribute according to their means to so righteous a cause, the doing which will bring them earthly and heavenly blessings in ever increasing abundance, for we know that to him who makes good use of that which he has more shall be given, whilst from him who is wanting in charity shall be taken the possessions that he deems his own.

"We offer to God our sincere and earnest prayers on behalf of those who have hitherto contributed or who may yet contribute to the advancement of the reign of Jesus Christ or the relief of the sufferers for righteousness' sake. May God in His mercy convert those who are given over to the vanities of the world and to the things that perish, and give them grace that they neglect not until their last days the work of preparing for Eternity !

We have found amongst the papers of Du Plan a letter written by him to a great personage at the Royal Court of Denmark, in which he pleads for the same cause, endeavouring, at the same time, to combat certain notorious prejudices which existed in that quarter against the Huguenots :—

welfare, and before they are surprised by death, to reconcile themselves with their Maker.

“The Lord has no need of us or of our belongings; our goodness is not to be measured by His. From everlasting He has been supremely happy and will continue so throughout eternity, altogether independent of us. Yet is it His pleasure that we should love one another, that we should help the poor, succour the outcast and visit the prisoner, for without charity we cannot hope to be the children of God or heirs of His Kingdom. Jesus Christ, Himself the Truth, has declared that men shall know by the love we bear one another that we are His disciples.

“As a believer, and as representing in the office of Deputy of the Churches a considerable body of Christians who groan under the Cross, I never fail in taking an opportunity of soliciting our brethren who enjoy liberty, peace, and plenty, to bestow their charity upon our brethren in Christ, who are fighting and suffering for the faith. Should my humble but earnest appeals be rejected or despised, I shall, though deeply grieved, be free from blame, for I shall have done my duty, and God will sooner or later accomplish His work. He will comfort and deliver His afflicted Church without human aid, and will cause His new Jerusalem, His well-beloved spouse, to come out victorious over every foe. Babylon, her rival, her persecutor, shall be utterly destroyed, together with all who have accepted her creeds and followed her counsels—which are these; pride, avarice, lust, love of the world and the things of the world, forgetfulness of God, contempt of His Holy Gospel, oppression of the poor, and insensibility to suffering.

“May God by His grace restore to life those who are dead to their true interests, awaken charity and love for their neighbour in those who do not possess these virtues, and increase the faith of all men.

“With sincere affection and esteem, I am Monsieur, Your Excellency's very obedient, humble servant,

“London, the November 1755.

“DU PLAN.”

attractions of the world, while the calamity shows us that neither age, sex, nor rank are beyond the reach of death.

"Yet a few brief years and we too shall have departed hence to receive the reward of our piety and good works. As we have sown so shall we reap; he who has sown diligently shall reap abundantly, but he who has sown sparingly shall reap sparingly. These plain truths, Monsieur, are well known to you, yet we cannot be too often reminded of them to the end that our conduct may be in conformity with our knowledge.

"There is an unfair and prejudiced belief that orthodox Lutherans do not encourage their Sovereigns to interest themselves on behalf of the Huguenots, although they themselves have thrown off the yoke of Rome and accept, for the most part, the same articles of faith. A similar ill-founded prejudice and probably unintentional narrow-mindedness prevents many Lutherans from regarding us as their brethren, though they acknowledge the same God as their Father, the same Christ as their Saviour, the same Holy Spirit as enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting all believers, and the same heaven as their inheritance. Ill-founded prejudices and unworthy motives frequently, in like manner, hinder us from helping the afflicted, because we regard them as strangers, notwithstanding that Christ has taught us, in the parable of the good Samaritan, that we should have compassion upon all men, and should regard all men as neighbours. For, as neither the office of priest nor Levite, nor outward profession of Christianity, nor the calling of curé or minister of the Gospel can justify a failure in charity, so the greater our own light, and the richer our temporal and spiritual blessings, the greater will be our condemnation if we make not good use of the talents entrusted to us.

"Christians whose conduct is consistent with their professions will derive satisfaction from the foregoing re-statement of vital truths, whilst those who are less mindful of their duties ought, as they value their eternal

Province, none is without its ministers and its public worship, while one even has its temples. Everywhere are to be seen large and flourishing communities of the faithful, full of enlightenment and zeal. Nevertheless the storm of persecution continues its ravages; it bursts out from time to time in different places, like an impetuous whirlwind carrying everything before it. The Provinces most exposed to its fury are Dauphiny, Périgord and Normandy.

"In Dauphiny eighteen persons have recently been prosecuted, twelve others have been lodged in the prisons of Valence and Grenoble, and several children have been carried off to convents.

"The Protestants of Périgord have been condemned to pay a fine of twenty-eight thousand *livres*, besides being compelled to provide accommodation for several brigades of cavalry, fourteen of which are stationed in the Province. These make incessant raids on the assemblies, carry off the children to be re-baptised, and generally cause great disturbance and alarm amongst the people.

"The kidnapping of children has been worst in Normandy; in the course of two months no fewer than seven have been shut up in convents.

"Other provinces, though less severely treated, have nevertheless been given, in a variety of ways, to understand that they are by no means free to worship God in their own way. Our co-religionists, moreover, are much mortified at the failure of their scheme for a Protestant Bank¹ and at the credit with which certain foul and baseless slanders against them had been received. The promoters of the banking scheme, two of whom are ruined, have been severely

1. In 1759 a number of Protestants conceived the idea of purchasing toleration with gold. The finances of the kingdom at the time in question being at a very low ebb, and the government being desirous of raising money in every possible way, this society of Protestants proposed to establish in Paris a house whose special business it should be to raise money on shares by the help of their co-religionists. The funds so procured it was intended to offer on loan to the King under certain stipulated conditions. The plan, however, was a failure.

censured. As touching the book written by the Abbot De Caveirac, it is freely circulated in all quarters by the commandants, and by the Royal house itself.

"My father, Monsieur, desires me to convey to you his best wishes. He often dwells with pleasure on the missionary journeys you took together in former days, and the kindly interchange of friendly converse by which they were enlivened. He takes a warm interest in your welfare and in that of your wife and dear children.

"I have the honor to remain, with sincere respect, Monsieur, your very humble and obedient servant.

"COURT, Junior."

Less than a year after the receipt of this letter Du Plan heard with great sorrow of the death of Antoine Court. We possess the letter in which the son of the refugee Pastor announced the sad intelligence to the old friend of his father.

"2nd of August 1760.

"Monsieur,

"I have been too long silent, but alas I have not been silent willingly! Overwhelmed with grief and worn out with fatigue I have had my hand constantly on the plough with scarcely a moment's breathing time. Both my father and myself warmly appreciated the cordiality and affection of your letter of the twenty-third of March, and he was overjoyed at the revival of that intercourse which was always one of his happiest memories, while it was for me an inexpressible pleasure to be a bond of union between you, the common friend of both. I should have replied at once but, being compelled to watch by the bedside of my dear father, who died a short time since of a lingering malady with which he had been afflicted for a twelvemonth, I was unequal to the effort. Alas! in spite of all our care, this tender father, this zealous friend, is no more! He fell asleep on the twelfth of June at a quarter past 12 o'clock, and his

redeemed spirit winged its flight to its Maker, in whose service he had spent his life. He leaves my sister and myself plunged in the deepest sorrow, and deprived of all the resources that his labours had procured for us.

"Having had charge of his correspondence during his life-time, I have continued it up to the present moment. I have tendered my services to the various Churches and friends with whom he was connected, and the offer has been accepted by all so far as it was in their power. For eighteen years I have acted as private secretary to my father, and have imbibed most of his views and sentiments. Would that I had his ability—at all events I have his willing spirit. My grief would indeed be increased were I unable to make myself useful to the beloved Churches in whose service you and he have spent your lives and encountered so many perils, and my most ardent desire is to serve the cause more effectually every day.

"I venture to hope, Monsieur, that the friendly feelings which you entertained for the father will be extended to the son, and in this expectation I am encouraged by the tone of your last letter. I trust you will be of opinion that my sentiments towards you and the desire I have to cultivate your friendship are sufficient justification for my making this request.

"It is with a sense of pleasure and thankfulness that I hear you still occupy yourself on behalf of the Churches. I trust you will keep me well acquainted with all your doings, and I shall make it a point to inform our friends of them, for I shall be delighted if I can, in this or in any other way, aid in the accomplishment of our common object.

"You are aware, Monsieur, with what assiduity and zeal my father toiled at his *History of the Churches of France*. He broke the work up into several distinct parts; amongst others, the *History of the Camisards*. Grieved to think so much valuable labour should be lost by his writings remaining buried in the obscurity of his study, I spared no pains to induce my father to publish them. His means

being too limited to accomplish this, I undertook to raise a subscription and shall thus be enabled to print the *History of the Camisards*. Two presses have been at work at it since March, and the book, which will consist of three volumes *duodecimo*, each containing at least five hundred pages, will, I hope, shortly be published. Unfortunately my father left the work incomplete, involving on my part the necessity of labouring hard to finish it under unfavorable circumstances and amidst overwhelming cares. It will be illustrated by a map of the Cevennes that I drew up last winter and in which are prominently indicated places of special interest. I have already received the first proof of the map from Lyons, and all who have seen it, and who take any interest in geography, have expressed their approval

"Do you think, Monsieur, the book would sell in London? For the present the subscription price for the three volumes, including map, is four *livres*, but after publication the price will be six *livres*. Possibly Monsieur Vaillant might be disposed to subscribe for a number of copies, but as I am a stranger to him may I venture, Monsieur, to ask you kindly to bring the matter to his attention?

"Since I last had the pleasure of writing to you, death has made great ravages amongst our friends and the leading men connected with the Churches. It removed from us, in October, at Geneva, the excellent and much esteemed Professor Polier, and shortly afterwards Monsieur Sarrasin, senior. In France, in the month of February, we lost Monsieur Redonnel, formerly pastor at Montpellier and afterwards of Bordeaux, and in April the celebrated Boyer.

"We have here a well attended college containing at present about twenty-four students from Normandy, Saintonge, Angoumois, Périgord, Béarn, Upper Languedoc, the Upper Cevennes, Vivarais and Dauphiny. They nobly vied with each other during my father's illness in watching at his bedside night and day until the end, doing their utmost to relieve my anxieties. I have been appointed Professor of

Moral Philosophy, and besides myself there is a Professor of Theology and another of Latin.

"Last year the Abbot De Caveirac published an enormous *octavo* volume entitled 'An Apology for the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes under Louis XIV,' which consisted of nothing but accusations against the Protestants; these my father and I were asked to rebut. The matter has been taken in hand by the Library of Arts and Sciences in Holland, which has issued a memoir on the subject, and this having come to the knowledge of the Court has resulted in the disgrace of the Abbot.

"Monsieur De Richelieu, Governor of Guienne, is endeavouring to put an end to public worship, and even to prevent meetings in private houses throughout the province; he is also taking measures to enforce the re-baptism of children. What may be the issue of this attempt in the recently re-organised Churches, whose members are still timid and fearful, none can tell, but we trust that they will glorify God and His Son Jesus Christ by their constancy.

"The Assembly of Catholic Clergy is dissolved. Before separating, the members presented to the King, through the Bishop of Puy, a remonstrance against Protestant preachers especially on the subject of marriage. The King, however, regarding their complaints as conceived in a spirit of animosity and grossly exaggerated, and also because no remedy was suggested for the evil, declined to listen to them.

"Accept my thanks for your kindness in the matter of the widow Cazali. Though I have not the honor of being known to Monsieur the Chevalier D'Oliveira, I beseech you to present to him my respectful salutations. His excellent speech on the terrible calamity at Lisbon, of which city he is a native, gives me a very high opinion of him; his elevated sentiments show that he is a man of noble and tender heart.

"A letter which I have received from Monsieur Serçes causes me great grief; it would appear that he is on the brink of the grave. I know of your estrangement, Monsieur, and I cannot deny that the knowledge has cut me to the heart.

Ought such serious differences to exist between persons of earnest piety who are engaged in the same cause? I should like to think, that letting bygones be bygones, you are ready to extend to each other the hand of friendship. It would have been a source of much consolation to my father if this reconciliation could have been accomplished during his lifetime, and it will make me truly happy if I can now aid in bringing it about. Monsieur Serces appears disposed to make advances, and I know, Monsieur, that you are a friend of peace; what then hinders a reconciliation? My heart bleeds when I think that I am in close relationship with two persons who honor me with their friendship and are united in my heart, but who are at variance the one with the other.

"It is well nigh time that I allowed you to take breath, for I have written a long letter. Your kindness, however, gives me confidence, and I have, as you perceive, spoken my mind freely. It is because I wished to write to you at length that I waited a favorable opportunity for inditing the present letter. Continue to honor me with your friendship, and rest assured that no one is more devoted to you or holds you in greater esteem and consideration than, Monsieur, your very humble and obedient servant

"COURT."

Du Plan lost no time in replying.

Kentish Town, August, 1760.

"Monsieur, my dear friend and brother in Christ,

"I have received your letter of the second of August, which, touching as it does on a variety of subjects, has produced varied effects on my mind. I should be hard-hearted and unnatural were I unmindful of the loss we have sustained—you of a kind and tender father, I of a long tried and zealous friend, and the Churches of France of a faithful and laborious servant; but how brilliant soever may have been his talents, or however useful his work, God can raise up other labourers to supply his place, and the year passed

by his bed of sickness ought to have fitted you to become his successor.

" You have had the satisfaction of comforting him and ministering to his wants during his time of trial, of witnessing his patience, his faith and his resignation to the will of God. You have been assisted in your good work by men destined for the ministry, and now that God has ended our friend's conflicts and sorrows, he rests from his labours and his works do follow him. What a consolation for those who loved him is the assurance that the servant of God who has fought the good fight, who has been faithful unto death, has now obtained that crown of life which Jesus Christ purchased for us with his blood. The believer does not die when his soul is separated from the body, on the contrary he lives more than ever; his body which is subject to an infinity of cares and infirmities clogs the aspirations of his soul, and his soul, freed from its mortal tenement and the things of time, beholds an unclouded God, sees Jesus Christ face to face and is changed into His image. We ought not to lament the loss of your father, but rather to rejoice that the friend whom we loved and whose memory we cherish is now happy in heaven. But can we truly say that he is lost to us when his memory is so dear, and while the fruit of his labours is visible in our Churches? I would add for our further consolation that your father not alone lives in Heaven and in his works, but lives again in you; you are animated by his spirit, and endowed with his talents; you have equal zeal for God, equal love for our brethren in France and equal affection for his friends, amongst whom I glory to count myself. For these reasons it is at once my duty and my pleasure to bear witness to the mutual esteem and friendship which marked the intercourse of your father and myself when we were fellow-labourers in France and Switzerland, for the glory of God and the edification of His Church.

" Thanks be to God, the Churches of France, in spite of frequently recurring persecutions, are in a happier and more

flourishing condition than when your father and I began to interest ourselves on their behalf. Not only are there many more pastors but the Churches are much more numerous, and if it please God to hear our prayers and to bless our colleagues' and our own labours, the truth will ere long make more progress in France than at any time since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. My hopes are not grounded alone on the goodness, the power and the faithfulness of God, manifested from the first towards His Church universal, but also on facts of which I am personally cognisant, on the letters of my correspondents, and on the exertions of the band of young evangelists of whom you have made mention in your letter, for Providence will never allow them to remain idle while labourers are so much wanted in His vineyards.

"Besides these just and weighty considerations, we may draw much encouragement from the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments which point to the destruction of Babylon and the triumph of Jerusalem—the triumph of truth, justice and holiness over the error, superstition, idolatry, and vice which abound in the world. This consummation will be due to the grace of the Holy Spirit, for it is God alone through His Holy Spirit who is able to convert the unbelieving. It is God alone who can create new heavens and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. Then, according to His promises, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; then there shall be but one fold and one shepherd; then shall all men be taught of the Lord and animated by the same spirit, being of one heart and of one soul, like as were the believers in the time of the Apostles, after receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. While looking for these blessed days let us, as did the Apostles while awaiting the descent of the Holy Ghost in Jerusalem after their Master had been taken up into heaven, prepare for them by gathering ourselves together for prayer and supplication and good works. Especially should we, who by the grace of God enjoy that peace and liberty of conscience which are denied to our brethren, take

find amongst the papers of Du Plan. The letter foreshadows his approaching end and affords further proof of the unshaken piety, deep faith and truly Christian resignation of this devoted servant of God.

“ My dear Cousin,

“ Although for some time past I have scarcely had a day's freedom from suffering, I regard it as a mercy that my life is still spared, feeling persuaded that all things work together for good to them that love God. If we believe His word, we ought not to doubt that He has loved us with an infinite love, in that He has given His only Son to die for us; and if we are persuaded of His love for us we ought not to doubt His infinite wisdom, which knows what is best for us and deals with us in the manner most conducive to His own glory and our salvation.

“ We have reason to believe that our souls are immortal, that our bodies will be raised, and that there will be a final judgment, when God will deal with all men according to their works—the impious and the wicked will be punished with everlasting torment in company with devils, the faithful who have endeavoured to please God will be happy in heaven to all eternity, dwelling in His presence and with the holy angels. If all this be true we ought to regard the sufferings of this world as nothing compared with the bliss of eternity, while we ought to bear our afflictions with patience and submission to the will of God, knowing that they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We remember too that God has not only pre-ordained that we shall resemble His Son in His eternal glory and felicity in heaven, but that we shall also resemble Him in the sufferings He endured on this earth, which in their duration are but as a moment compared with eternity. We ought at the same time not to forget that God has promised the gift of His Holy Spirit to sustain and comfort us under our trials, and that we be not overcome by them. Jesus Christ, who has experienced every sorrow and knows

all our burdens, is faithful and all powerful to help us and even to give us, if He think fit, a foretaste of the happiness to come.

"Herein, my dear cousin, is my chief consolation under the infirmities I bear. Through the infinite mercy of God, the boundless merits of Jesus Christ, and the blessing of the Holy Spirit, I trust I shall be enabled to persevere in the faith, and ere long to commit my soul in peace and joy into the hands of my Creator and adorable Saviour. I feel no certainty that my life will be prolonged even for a quarter of an hour, and at best it cannot be of long duration except by a miracle. Whatever may happen, God be praised! Only may I have grace from the Lord to be found numbered with the wise virgins who are waiting for the bridegroom's coming with their lamps trimmed, so that whether I live or whether I die soon I may be ready.

Early in the month of July, 1763, Du Plan passed away, and by his death the Protestant Church lost one of the most devoted of its offspring. In the course of his long career, which we have, so to speak, been following day by day, his faith never wavered. The sacred flame that was kindled in the soul of the young soldier burnt with unquenchable ardour in that of the aged veteran. Often towards the close of his life his thoughts reverted to his earlier years and he would thrill with joy on comparing the present with the past. It was not without emotion that he called to mind those days of enthusiasm, when renouncing his military career, he bade a final adieu to the world and its vanities and devoted himself wholly to the service of his Divine Master. The times were then grave. The chill blast of persecution had

bowed down the proudest heads, dispersed the pastors and devastated the flocks. Yet encouraged by the example of some aged preacher or some poor prophetess who still bade defiance to rigorous edicts and maintained at the risk of their lives the drooping cause of Protestantism, we have seen this man of noble birth, brought up in ease and refinement, attending the assemblies in the Desert, encountering every danger, living like the peasants themselves,—his companions, rude mountainers, and he their friend and pastor. He bethought him of that happy day when, in the midst of his absorbing occupations, he first met Antoine Court and “grappled him to his heart.” Drawn together by a love like that of David and Jonathan, they struggled to rekindle by the fervour of their zeal, and their ardent labours and self sacrifice, the expiring fires of French Protestantism; it was they who, regardless of the edicts assembled the scattered sheep, while by word and deed they sought to strengthen the constant, rouse the lukewarm and encourage the weak. When persecution fell upon him also, we find our hero flying from the Château of his fathers and becoming a wanderer on the face of the earth, an exile and a stranger. Happy time! exile opened to him a new field of activity in the service of the Church. By his missionary journeys in Switzerland, England, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Holland and his pressing appeals to small and great, he was enabled to raise funds sufficient not alone for founding a College at Lausanne for the training of pastors for his native

country, but for the purchase of religious books for his persecuted brethren. He was also instrumental in eliciting the sympathies of the Protestant Powers on behalf of the most unfortunate amongst the sufferers. Thanks to his exertions, galley-slaves were liberated and the lot of other prisoners made more tolerable. Yet, alas! with what sad thoughts were these happy reminiscences often mingled! Where were his early companions, his old friends? Arnaud, Huc, Vesson, Durand, Roger and many others had perished on the scaffold; Antoine Court had died at Lausanne; Bonbonnoux and Cortiez, the sole survivors, broken down with fatigue and crushed with the infirmities of age, had abandoned the struggle and retired into exile, where they awaited their end. His own closing years were darkened by calumny and bitter mortification.

But in compensation for these sorrows, sufferings and martyrdoms, his heart glowed in the anticipation of the dawn of better days. Providence had accomplished its work. As hitherto in the history of the Church, the blood of martyrs had proved to be the seed of the harvest. The mustard seed had become a great tree; the winds and the storms had shaken it and buffeted its branches, but its roots had only struck the more deeply into the earth, until now beneath its grateful shade a numerous and god-fearing generation could take shelter. Baviile, Bernage, Le Nain, Saint-Priest and the other persecutors had wielded the scourge in vain, their violence and wrath had been defied.

Yet a little while and a new whirlwind would sweep away the still heavy, but already drifting clouds. The Revolution was advancing with rapid strides, bringing in its train that most precious of all liberties, liberty of conscience. Yet a little while and the chains of captives would be broken and all would breathe freely and proudly under the glorious canopy of heaven. Yet a little while and Protestantism victorious would replace the despairing cry of evil days, "Save Lord we perish," with the watchword of victory, "Through the cross triumphant."

It was not permitted to Du Plan to witness the dawn of this blissful day. Nevertheless he cherished in his noble heart, with unshaken faith, the hope of a happy future. Like Moses he saw from afar the promised land, though God had not allowed him to enter it.

While contemplating with gratitude our hero's life we are tempted to compare the present with the past, the indifference of to-day with the zeal of former times, and to apply to ourselves the reproof of the Prophet: "Your fathers, where are they"?

Be that as it may, we are without fear for the future of a Church that God has so loved; and notwithstanding the evils of the present and the uncertainties of the future, we exclaim with Jesus Christ "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

APPENDIX.

I.

GENEALOGY OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.¹

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Ribot² family who occupied the manor Du Plan de la Favède in the parish of Laval in the diocese of Uzès, was represented by two near relatives, possibly brothers, named respectively Anthoine and Jacques.

ANTHOINE RIBOT died prior to 1577, leaving issue a son named Jean, who was Captain and Governor of the Château de Sommières in 1577, a period at which he gave to Bringuier Ribot, son of the late Jacques, a receipt for the sum of fifty livres for all his paternal inheritance "to which he may now be or henceforth become entitled, to pertain by right to the said Bringuier."

JACQUES RIBOT was the founder of the family of the Seigneurs Du Plan, of which the filiation is established as follows:—

I.—JACQUES RIBOT died before 1577 and was the father of

II.—Noble BRINGUIER, or BERENGER RIBOT, *Seigneur Du*

1. This genealogy has been drawn up with the aid of the family papers and copies of wills. For the latter (which were accidentally discovered in the garret of the Château de la Favède where they had remained buried for more than a century) we are indebted to the present proprietor, Monsieur Arbousset.

2. There formerly existed in the Parish of Saint-Florent, a locality of the name of *Des Ribots*, and near to it, among the out-buildings of the Château des Silhols, was a spring known as the *Fontaine des Ribots*.

On the 24th of November 1493, Pierre Ribot living on the estate Des Silhols in the Parish of Saint-Florent, in a communication addressed to Seigneur De Saint-Florent mentioned certain possessions as formerly belonging to Jacques Ribot, also of the aforesaid Des Silhols. Bernard Ribot, in 1548 sold the manor of Des Silhols to one Claude Pomier. This incident may possibly furnish a clue to the origin of the family of De Ribot.

Plan de la Favède. He made his will on the 15th of January, 1585.¹ On the 13th of February 1577 he received of Jean Ribot, Captain and Governor of the Château de-Sommières, and son of the late Anthoine, the reversion of his (Jean's) paternal inheritance.² He died previous to the year 1586, and was the father of

III.—Noble ANDRE RIBOT, *Seigneur Du Plan*, who married on the 13th of November, 1586,³ Mademoiselle Marie De Montméjean, and made his will on the 8th of August, 1621.⁴ He had issue from this marriage:—

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Jean, first-born and heir, | } Mentioned in the will of
their father, and succes-
sively substituted as heirs
to their elder brother. |
| 2. <i>Garcine</i> or <i>Gavernie</i> ?
(perhaps Garnier)? | |
| 3. <i>François</i> ; | |
| 4. <i>Marc-Antoine</i> . | |

IV.—Noble JEAN RIBOT, *Seigneur Du Plan*, married on the 20th of January, 1649,⁵ Mademoiselle Suzanne De Plantier De Graverol, and made his will on the 25th of November 1657.⁶ He had issue from this marriage:—

1. *Louis*, first-born;
2. *Estienne*, De Ribot, *Seigneur Du Plan de la Favède*, married on the 19th of February, 1680⁷ Mademoiselle Louisse

1. Before Maître Privat, Solicitor, of Saint-Germain-de-Valfrancesque.
2. Maître Guilliot, Solicitor, of Sommières.
3. Contract attested by Vareilles, Solicitor, of Saint-Germain.
4. Before the same Solicitor.
5. Contract attested by Maître Privat, Solicitor, of Saint-Germain.
6. Before Jacques Favède, Solicitor, of Brenoux.
7. By compact made before Maitres Jacques Guiraudet, and Pierre Bastide, Solicitors of Alais. There were present at this contract, Jean De Plantier, Seigneur De Ruffières; Pierre De Plantier, Seigneur de la Baume; Nobles Guillaume and Daniel De Baudan, Seigneurs Des Montaud; Maître Louis De Saunier, Chief of the Accountant General's Office for the district of Alais; Claude and Estienne D'Audibert, Seigneurs des Tamaris, father and son; Maître Pierre Paulet, Solicitor of Anduze; Noble Jacques De Vergèzes, Seigneur D'Aubussargues.

De Bandan, daughter of Noble Charles De Baudan, Seigneur De Montaud, and of Madeleine De Paillier, of the town of Alais ;

3. *Jacques*, described as follows :—

V. Noble JACQUES RIBOT, *Seigneur de Rouveret and Du Plan de la Favède*, was appointed Lieutenant in the Polastre company of the Regiment of Piedmont, in which a vacancy had occurred through the retirement of De Maisonville his brother,¹ by letters patent granted by the King at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, on the 20th of December, 1679. He married Mademoiselle Marie De Fabre, of the town of Alais. He was upheld in his claim to nobility by the sovereign judgment of Monsieur De Lamoignon, Intendant of Languedoc, pronounced on the 15th of August, 1698. According to his, will opened and displayed in presence of the crown officers, and witnessed by Maître Louis Durand, Solicitor, it appears that Noble François Deleuze, Seigneur De Lencizole, became heir to a part of his property, and was living about the middle of the eighteenth century at the Château Du Plan, where he assumed the title of Seigneur De Lencizole and Du Plan.² The remainder of his estate was seized in 1752 by the Crown, as being property belonging to a refugee, and his only son was thus deprived of his inheritance.

VI.—BENJAMIN DE RIBOT, Seigneur Du Caila and Du Plan, known by the name of Du Caila during his father's life-time and afterwards by that of Du Plan, was born on the 13th of March 1688. In his early years he served in the

1. The brother who bore this title of Seigneur De Maisonville, and who had preceded Jacques Ribot in the rank of Lieutenant in the Regiment of Piedmont, was no doubt Louis, the eldest of the family.

2. In 1751, Noble François Deleuze, Seigneur De Lencizole and Du Plan, living at his Château Du Plan, son of the above, on inheriting and succeeding to his father's estate, assumed to himself in a deed having reference to property bequeathed to him by the family of De Plantier, the title of Noble Jacques De Ribot, Seigneur Du Plan.

armies of Louis XIV, but in 1710 he abandoned the military career in order to devote himself entirely to the cause of religion. A price having been put upon his head, he was compelled in 1724 to leave France. In 1725 he was nominated by the National Synod as Deputy of the Reformed Churches of France to the Courts of the Protestant Powers. In this capacity, between 1725 and 1751, he more than once travelled through Germany, Holland, Switzerland, England, Denmark and Sweden, and obtained means sufficient to found a College for the training of ministers, who went secretly to preach in France, as well as to administer relief to those who were suffering for religion. In 1731, he went for the first time to England, where at the termination of his mission he definitively established himself. Having fixed his residence in London, he made the acquaintance of Madame Denman, a widow, whom he shortly after married. She was a daughter of Monsieur Du Passage De Voutron, a refugee family from La Rochelle, and of Mademoiselle Noul his wife. He died in 1763, and his widow died on the 30th of September 1790. From this marriage there was issue

1. *Marie Marguerite Françoise*, born on the 14th of May 1753, married in 1793, Mr. John Lloyd.

2. *André Bousquet Jacques Benjamin Pellet*, born the 2nd of May 1756, died at the age of 25 years, unmarried.

1. Mademoiselle Noul was the daughter of Monsieur Noul, a chaplain to the Bishop of Ely, and Mademoiselle Du Tang, his wife. This lady who afterwards made a second marriage with a French nobleman, of the name of De Pellet, an attaché at the Court of the Kings of England in the time of the Georges, was the daughter of Monsieur Du Tang, Pastor of the Church of Rouen, who left France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

ABSTRACT OF THE FOREGOING GENEALOGY.

I. Anthoine Ribot, probably a brother of Jacques Ribot, who died prior to 1577, was the father of

II. Jean Ribot, who was governor of the Château De Sommières, in 1577, in which year he sold the reversion of his inheritance to Bringuier Ribot, son of the late Jacques.

I. Jacques Ribot, probably a brother of Anthoine Ribot, who died prior to 1577, was the father of

II. Noble Bringuier Ribot, *Seigneur Du Plan de la Favède*, who in 1577, paid to Jean Ribot, son of the late Anthoine, fifty livres for the reversion of his (Jean's) inheritance, and died prior to 1586. He was the father of

III. Noble André Ribot, *Seigneur Du Plan*, who married on the 13th November, 1586

M^{lle} Marie
Du
Montméjean

and left issue

1. Jean,
2. Garcine,
3. François,
4. Marc-Antoine.

VI. Noble Jean Ribot, *Seigneur Du Plan*, married on the 20th January, 1649

M^{lle} Suzanne
De Plantier
De Graverol.

and left issue

1. Louis,
2. Estienne De Ribot, *Seigneur Du Plan de la Favède*, who married on the 19th February 1680 M^{lle} Louisse De Baudan.

3. Jacques,

V. Noble Jacques Ribot, *Seigneur de Rouveret and Du Plan de la Favède*, married on—

M^{lle} Marie
De Fabre.

and left issue

VI. Benjamin de Ribot, *Seigneur Du Caila and Du Plan*, born on the 13th of March 1688, married on the 4th Nov. 1751

M^{me} Denman,
née
De Voutron,
daughter of
Monsieur De
Voutron and
M^{lle} Noul.

and left issue

1. Marie, Marguerite, Française.
2. André Bousquet Jacques Benjamin Pellet, died in 1781, unmarried.

Mr. John Lloyd married in 1793 M^{lle} Marie Marguerite Française Du Plan.

II.

Monsieur Du Plan, in addition to his copious and edifying correspondence, and his petitions to the various Powers, wrote several controversial treatises, and sermons. They all display the same enlightened understanding and deep piety which characterise the other productions of his pen.

FINIS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH AND CONVERSION OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1688—1710.

His birth. First religious impressions of Du Plan. He is instructed by the Old Camisards. He attends the reunions of the Inspired. His vocation becomes apparent. An Inspired predicts his future 1

CHAPTER II.

CONDITION OF FRENCH PROTESTANTISM.

1710—1715.

Penalties against the apostates. Protestant marriages considered illegitimate. The Tower of Constance. The penalty of the galleys. Resignation of the Protestants. Worship in the Home. Worship in the Desert. An Assembly in the Desert. Zeal and devotion of Du Plan 7

CHAPTER III.

FIRST JOURNEYS OF ANTOINE COURT.

1696—1715.

The family of Antoine Court. His call to the Holy Ministry. He parts from his Mother. His first rounds in the Vivarais. The Synod of 1715. Court's companions in work 18

CHAPTER X.

THE DECLARATION OF 1724.
1723—1725.

Statement of the Bishop of Alais. The Edict of 1724.
The Protestants are terror-stricken. Rigorous
measures against the preachers. Letter of Du Plan
to the King of England. Letter of Du Plan to the
King of Prussia. Letter of Saurin to Du Plan.
The anxiety of Du Plan. Providential deliverance
of Antoine Court. Letter of congratulation from
Du Plan

85

CHAPTER XI.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN IS NOMINATED AS DEPUTY
GENERAL OF THE SYNODS TO THE
PROTESTANT POWERS.

The 1st of May, 1725.

The Synod of 1725. Letter of Antoine Court to Du
Plan. He informs him of his nomination as
Deputy. Official attestation of the Synod. Dis-
interested conduct of Du Plan. His letter to the
Synod

99

CHAPTER XII.

ONE YEAR'S RESIDENCE OF DU PLAN AT GENEVA.
1724—1725.

Geneva the resort of Refugees. Personal preferences
of Du Plan for Geneva. His favourable reception
at Geneva. Letter of Antoine Court to Du Plan.
The state of the Church in France. Activity of
Du Plan prior to his nomination. Letter of Du
Plan to Antoine Court, imparting earnest advice.
Du Plan criticises Court's style of writing. Du
Plan deplores the scarcity of Pastors. The dis-

CHAPTER VIII.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN AND THE VESSONNIENS.

1721—1724.

Departure of Court for Geneva. The result of this journey. Court's letter to Du Plan. Cortiez accuses Du Plan of countenancing the Inspired. History of Vesson, The schism of Vesson and Huc. History of Huc. Irritation of Court against the Female Fanatics 48

CHAPTER IX.

THE MULTIPLIANTS.

1723.

The widow Verchand of Montpellier. She endeavours to win over Du Plan. The Sect of the Multipliers. Their condemnation. The execution of Vesson and Huc. Du Plan's letter to Court on the subject. Du Plan defends his conduct. He repudiates all connection with the Schismatics. He extols union and harmony. He demands the convocation of a Synod. Reply of Antoine Court. He accuses Du Plan of breaking the rules. He answers Du Plan's appeal to the Scriptures. The attributes of a true prophet. The Inspired do not possess these attributes. Du Plan justifies his prudent conduct. He replies to the sarcasm of Court. He urges the Convocation of a Synod. He furnishes proofs of his vocation. He disowns all relationship with the Multipliers. He asserts his belief in inspiration. Decree of the Synod against the Inspired. Du Plan is followed by the police. His flight from France. The extent of his sacrifices. His letter of farewell to Antoine Court. He gives some practical advice 57

CHAPTER X.

THE DECLARATION OF 1724.

1723—1725.

Statement of the Bishop of Alais. The Edict of 1724. The Protestants are terror-stricken. Rigorous measures against the preachers. Letter of Du Plan to the King of England. Letter of Du Plan to the King of Prussia. Letter of Saurin to Du Plan. The anxiety of Du Plan. Providential deliverance of Antoine Court. Letter of congratulation from Du Plan

85

CHAPTER XI.

BENJAMIN DU PLAN IS NOMINATED AS DEPUTY
GENERAL OF THE SYNODS TO THE
PROTESTANT POWERS.

The 1st of May, 1725.

The Synod of 1725. Letter of Antoine Court to Du Plan. He informs him of his nomination as Deputy. Official attestation of the Synod. Disinterested conduct of Du Plan. His letter to the Synod

99

CHAPTER XII.

ONE YEAR'S RESIDENCE OF DU PLAN AT GENEVA.

1724—1725.

Geneva the resort of Refugees. Personal preferences of Du Plan for Geneva. His favourable reception at Geneva. Letter of Antoine Court to Du Plan. The state of the Church in France. Activity of Du Plan prior to his nomination. Letter of Du Plan to Antoine Court, imparting earnest advice. Du Plan criticises Court's style of writing. Du Plan deplores the scarcity of Pastors. The dis-

advantages of appealing to foreign Pastors. Du Plan sends religious books into France. Dangers encountered by the Colporteurs. Du Plan interests himself in their mission. His noble-minded sentiments. His solicitude on behalf of the Churches. His solicitude for the galley-slaves. The motives for his charity. Court describes the progress of his work. The Confederation of the Churches. Financial situation of Du Plan ... 106.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST JOURNEY OF DU PLAN IN SWITZERLAND.

October and November, 1725.

Du Plan's want of money. He urges Court to procure it for him. Poverty of the Churches. Success of Du Plan in Switzerland. Establishment of the College at Lausanne. Bétrine, the first student at the College. Du Plan's letter respecting the collections in France. Particulars of his journey . 127.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SYNOD OF 1726 AND BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

Denunciations against Du Plan. His relations with the Inspired of Geneva. Court urges him to abstain from their company. Du Plan asserts his independence. He has always withstood the false Inspired. He demands toleration for his sentiments. Second letter to Court on the same subject. Solemnity of the times. Du Plan eulogises charity. His appreciation of Court's observations. Accusations against Du Plan. The suffering he endured in his mind. He writes to Court to justify himself. Du Plan as contrasted with his accusers. He consents to write an apology to the Synod.

Practical advice. Letter of Du Plan to the Synod. Cortiez accuses Du Plan in the Synod of 1726. Defence of Du Plan by Antoine Court. Du Plan gives pledges of obedience to the Synod. Letter of Du Plan to the Synod. His disinterestedness. He exposes De Fleury's schemes of persecution. He exhorts his brethren to prayer and repentance. 134

CHAPTER XV.

THE SYNOD OF 1727 CONFIRMS DU PLAN
IN HIS OFFICE.

1727.

Fresh attacks on Du Plan. Pastoral letter of Roger in favour of Du Plan. The Synod maintains Du Plan in his office. Instructions from the Synod to the Deputy. Letter of Du Plan to the Synod of 1727. Attestation of the Synod of 1727. Success of Du Plan in Switzerland. His influence in the College of Lausanne. Formation of the Committee at Geneva. Ordination of two Students in a foreign country. A dispute on the subject. Conduct of Du Plan. His advice on the question. He appeases the conflict 169

CHAPTER XVI.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY'S PERSECUTIONS.
COURT QUITS FRANCE
AGAINST THE WISHES OF DU PLAN.

1726—1729.

Cardinal de Fleury in power. De Fleury's schemes for persecution. Execution of Alexandre Roussel. Du Plan's letter to Court on the subject. Measures proposed for banishing the preachers. Court's thoughts are occupied about his wife. Du Plan

prepares him for an impending separation. A sacrifice that the Gospel enjoins. Departure of Rachel. Court joins her at Lausanne. The Churches murmur at his absence. Severe letter from Du Plan to Court. The Synods withhold Court's salary. Court complains of the action of the Synods. Another letter from Du Plan. Court refuses to leave Switzerland 189

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRAVELS OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1731—1745.

Forced inactivity of Du Plan. Attestation of the Synod of 1730. Letter of advice from the Synod to Du Plan. Certificate of the Venerable Company of Pastors. Du Plan's last journey to Switzerland. He encounters M. de Wateville. Impressions gathered on his journey. *His first residence in London.* His discouraging reception there. His perseverance is crowned with success. His generosity towards the refugees. The death of his father. *He leaves London. Journey in Holland.* His success there. *Journey in Germany.* Du Plan's aunt and sister arrive at Geneva. He addresses them a letter of welcome. He petitions the Court on behalf of the galley slaves. *Journey in Denmark.* Du Plan sympathizes with Court in his affliction. *Journey in Sweden. Du Plan revisits Copenhagen and Hamburg. He returns to London.* 208

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACTIVITY OF DU PLAN IN LONDON.

1738—1744.

Du Plan apprises his aunt and sister of his return to London. He discovers that his work in London

is ruined. He publishes an appeal on behalf of the Protestants. He describes the Tower of Constance. He portrays the severity of the persecution. He interests himself on behalf of the Confessors. Letter from two prisoners in the Tower of Constance. Letter from two galley-slaves at Marseilles. Death of the King of Prussia. Du Plan hesitates whether to go to Berlin or Geneva. The generosity of Du Plan. Death of his aunt Lèches. Letter of Pastor Vial de Beaumont. Pastor Serces. Du Plan and Lord Wilmington. Death of the sister of Du Plan. Last advice of Pastor Vial de Beaumont 232

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE MATTER OF DU PLAN.

Formation of the Committee in London. The accusations of Serces against Du Plan. A Synod appoints Court as Deputy of the Churches. Letter of Court to Du Plan. Rupture between the two friends. The calumnies of Serces. A new Synod maintains Du Plan in his office. Certificate from Ministers in London. A second certificate from Ministers in London. Du Plan claims compensation. He appeals for arbitration. Judgment of the Arbitrators. Du Plan and Court become reconciled to each other 252

CHAPTER XX.

DU PLAN AND THE GREAT PERSECUTION.

1745—1752.

Persecutions under the Intendancy of Le Nain in 1745. He is succeeded in 1750 by Saint-Priest, who enforces the re-baptism of Protestant children.

The attempted assassination of curés. The Minister Coste and Du Plan. Paul Rabaut and the Marquis De Paulmy. Respite of the Persecution. Letter of Cortiez on the persecutions of 1750. Letter of Le Maréchal to Du Plan. Letter of Redonnel on the persecutions of 1751. Letter of Redonnel on the persecutions of 1752. Letters of Pomaret on the persecutions of 1752. Abatement of the persecution in 1753. Letter of Franc on the condition of the Church in 1753. Letter of Rabaut on the condition of the Church in 1753. Persecution recommences in 1754. Proposed imprisonment of the wives of preachers. Letter of Franc to Benjamin Du Plan (1754). Letter of Pomaret to Benjamin Du Plan (1754). Toleration of the Intendant Mirepoix. Marshall De Thomond succeeds Mirepoix in 1757

270

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CLOSING YEARS OF BENJAMIN DU PLAN.

1751—1763.

Du Plan's integrity of character is questioned. His health in consequence suffers. His marriage. His generosity towards his fellow refugees, especially towards Cortiez. Du Plan addresses a petition to Louis XV. Du Plan's interest in the Confessors. He writes an appeal on their behalf. He addresses a distinguished personage in Denmark. Letter from Antoine Court's son to Du Plan. Scheme for a Protestant Bank. Letter of Court, Junior, on the death of his father. Letter from Du Plan in reply. Letter from Du Plan to his cousin Fabre. Death of Benjamin Du Plan. A glance retrospective. A glance prospective. The fathers and the sons .

320

APPENDIX.

Genealogy of Benjamin Du Plan	355
Abstract of the Genealogy	359
Works of Benjamin Du Plan	360

E R R A T A.

- On page 71, the tenth line,
for *character* read *characteristic*.
- On page 89, the foot note,
for *Edward Hughes*, read *Edmond Hughes*.
- On page 220, the tenth line from the bottom of the page,
for *Ribot*, read *De Ribot*.
- On page 232, the fifth line from the bottom of the page,
for *eight*, read *one*.

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